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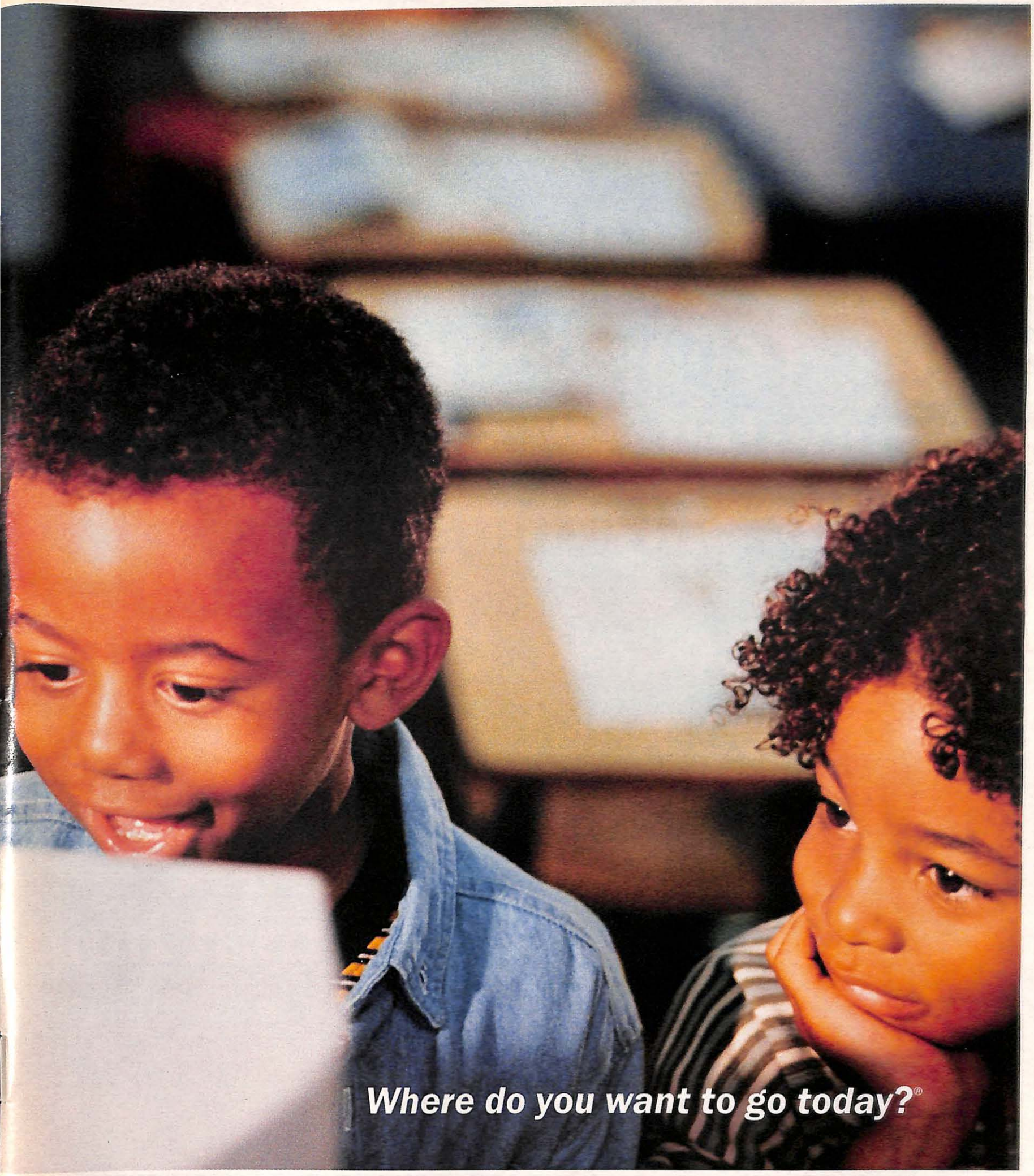
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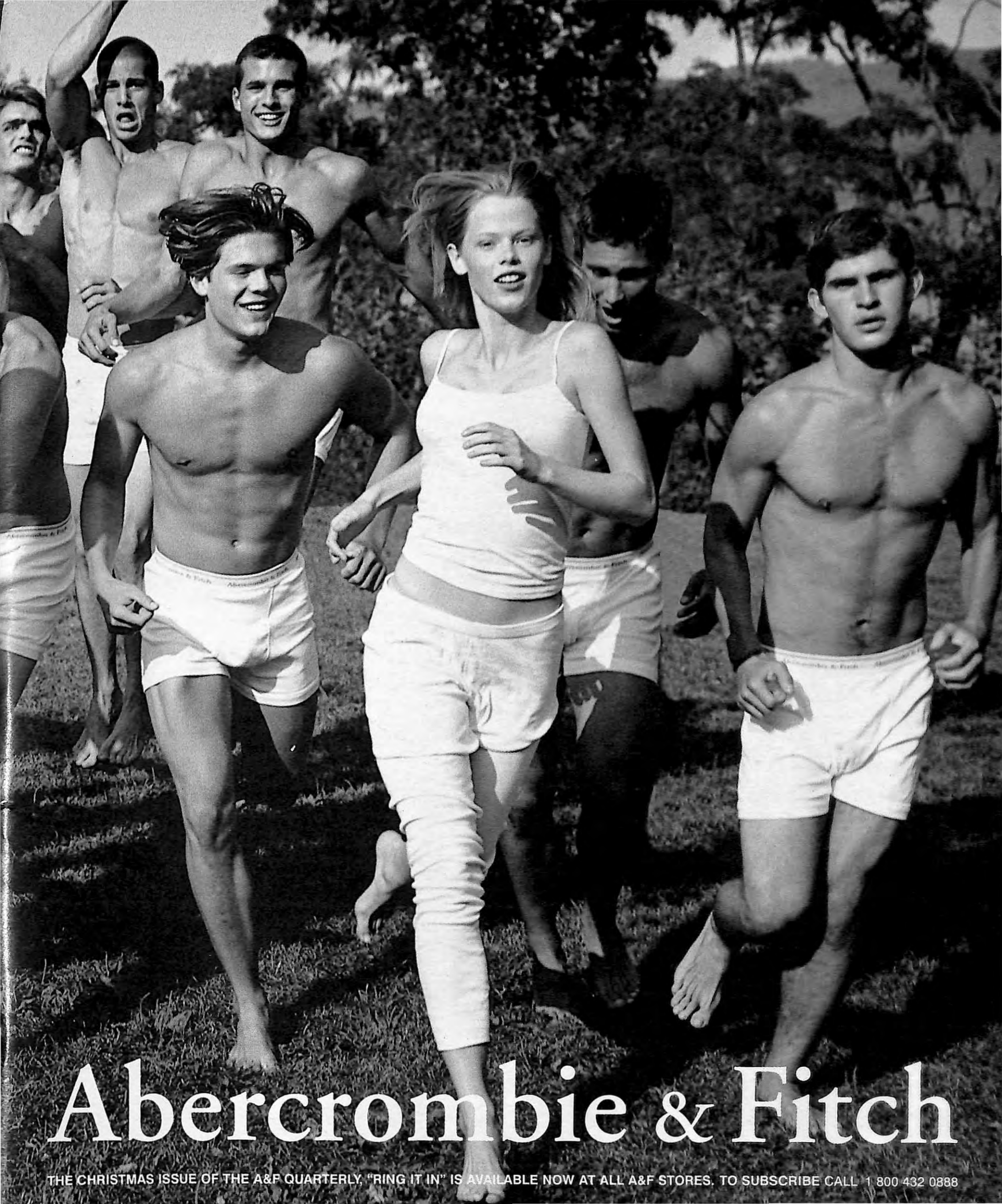
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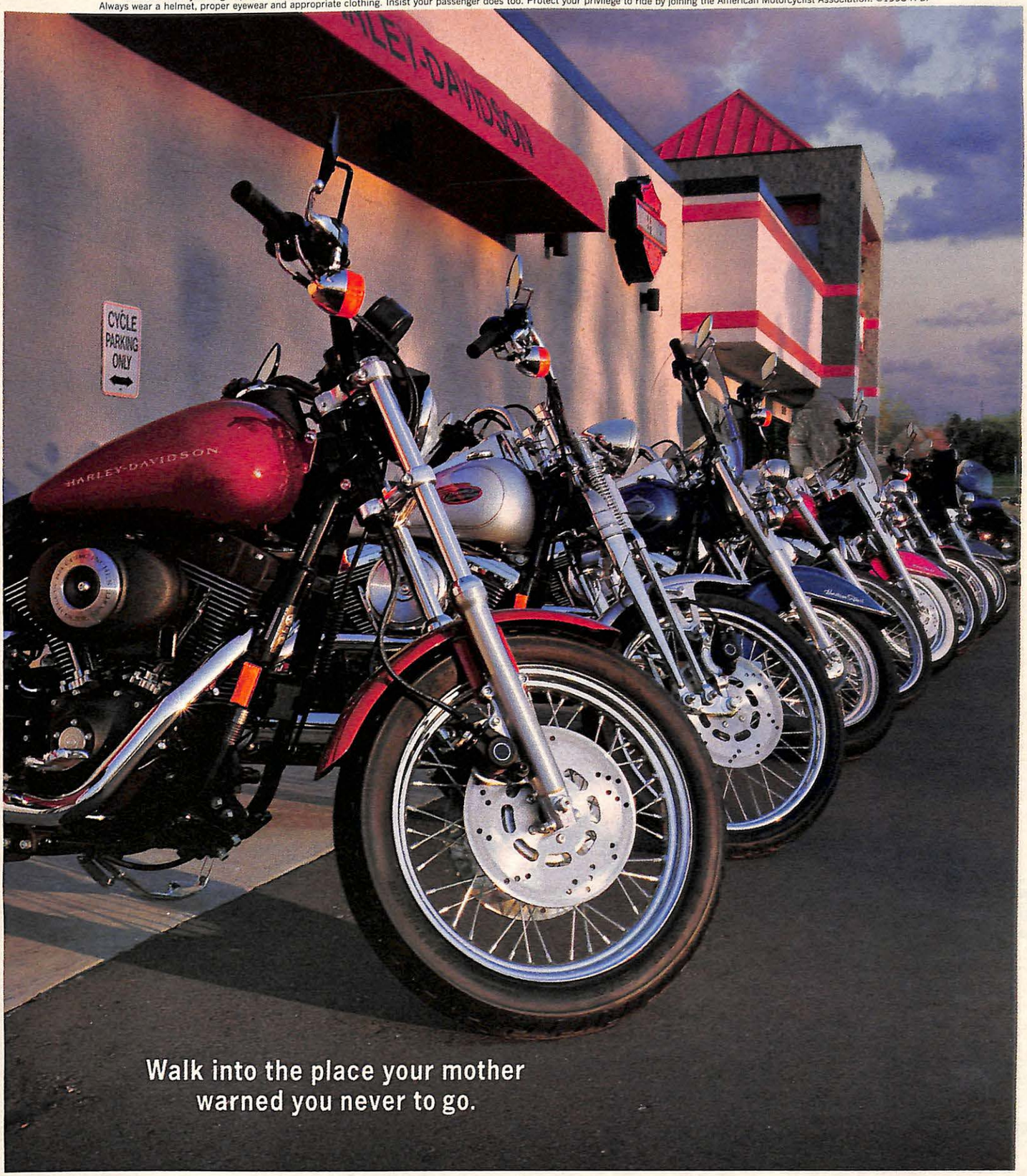
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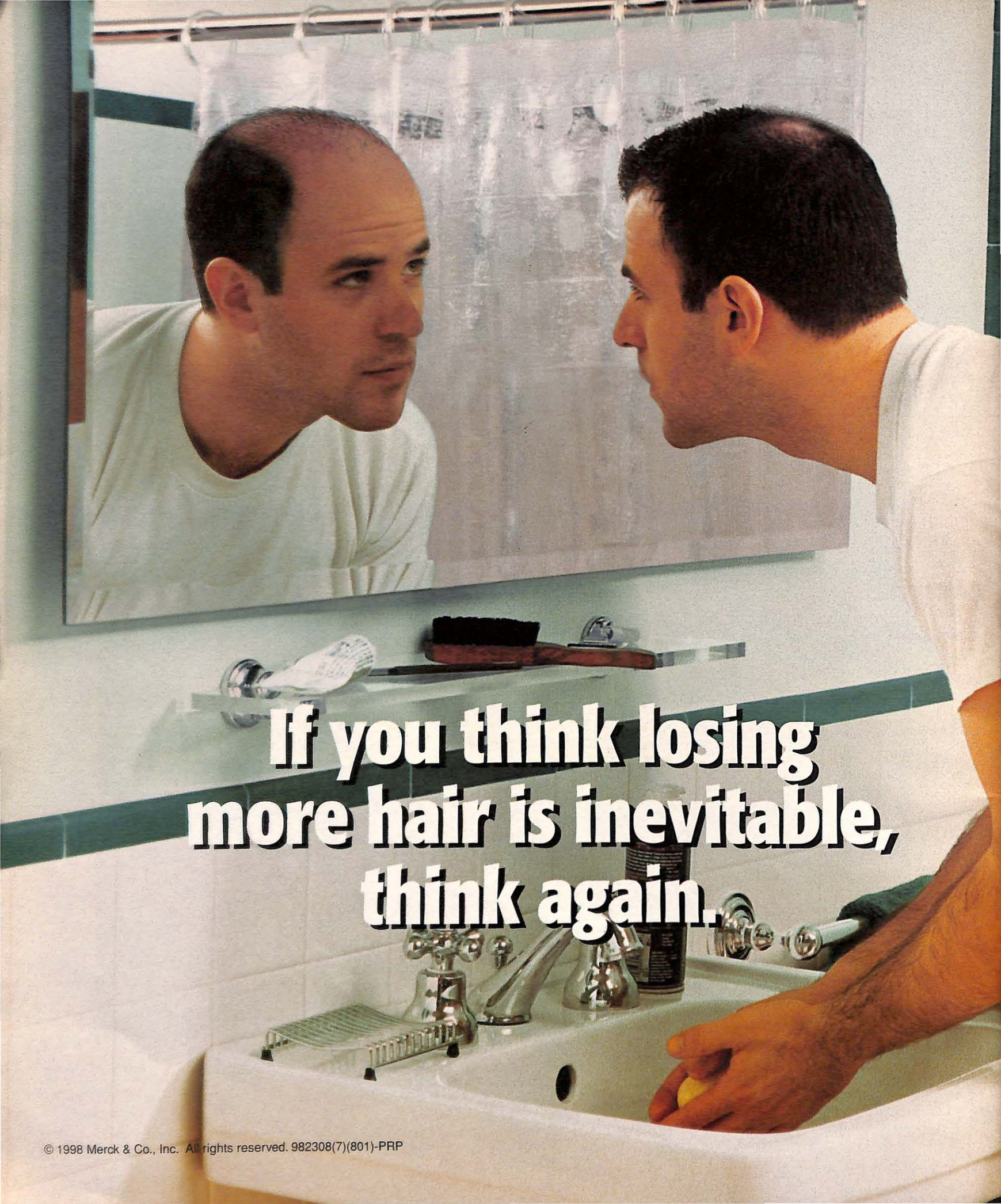
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- 83% maintained their hair based on hair count (vs. 28% with placebo).
- 66% had visible regrowth as rated by independent dermatologists (vs. 7% with placebo).
- 80% were rated as improved by clinical doctors (vs. 47% with placebo).
- Most men reported an increase in the amount of hair, a decrease in hair loss, and improvement in appearance.

*Based on vertex studies at 24 months of men 18 to 41 with mild to moderate hair loss.

Scientists have recently discovered that men with male pattern hair loss have an increased level of DHT in their scalps. PROPECIA blocks the formation of DHT and, in this way, appears to interrupt a key factor in the development of inherited male pattern hair loss in men. Importantly, PROPECIA helps grow natural hair – not just peach fuzz – and is as convenient to take as a vitamin: one pill a day.

Only a doctor can determine if PROPECIA is right for you. PROPECIA is for **men only.** Further, women who are or may potentially be pregnant must not use PROPECIA and should not handle crushed or broken tablets because of the risk of a specific kind of birth defect. (See accompanying Patient Information for details.) PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling.

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more to see visible results. PROPECIA may not regrow all your hair. And if you stop using this product, you will gradually lose the hair you have gained. There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works for recession at the temporal areas. If you haven't seen results after 12 months of using PROPECIA, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit.

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects. A very small number of men experienced certain side effects, such as: less desire for sex, difficulty in achieving an erection, and a decrease in the amount of semen. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men. These side effects were reversible and went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men (58%) who continued taking PROPECIA.

So start talking to your doctor. And stop thinking further hair loss is inevitable.

CALL 1-800-344-6622 or visit our website at www.propecia.com today to receive detailed product information, including clinical "before and after" photographs.

Please read the next page for additional information about PROPECIA.

Propecia™
(finasteride)
Helping make hair loss history™

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Propecia™*

(Finasteride) Tablets

Patient Information about PROPECIA®

(Pro-pee-sha)

Generic name: finasteride
(fin-AS-tur-eyed)

PROPECIA is for use by MEN ONLY.**

Please read this leaflet before you start taking PROPECIA. Also, read the information included with PROPECIA each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROPECIA when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is PROPECIA used for?

PROPECIA is used for the treatment of male pattern hair loss on the vertex and the anterior mid-scalp area.

PROPECIA is for use by **MEN ONLY** and should **NOT** be used by women or children.

What is male pattern hair loss?

Male pattern hair loss is a common condition in which men experience thinning of the hair on the scalp. Often, this results in a receding hairline and/or balding on the top of the head. These changes typically begin gradually in men in their 20s.

Doctors believe male pattern hair loss is due to heredity and is dependent on hormonal effects. Doctors refer to this type of hair loss as androgenetic alopecia.

Results of clinical studies:

For 12 months, doctors studied over 1800 men aged 18 to 41 with mild to moderate amounts of ongoing hair loss. All men, whether receiving PROPECIA or placebo (a pill containing no medication) were given a medicated shampoo (Neutrogena T/Gel®*** Shampoo). Of these men, approximately 1200 with hair loss at the top of the head were studied for an additional 12 months. In general, men who took PROPECIA maintained or increased the number of visible scalp hairs and noticed improvement in their hair in the first year, with the effect maintained in the second year. Hair counts in men who did not take PROPECIA continued to decrease.

In one study, patients were questioned on the growth of body hair. PROPECIA did not appear to affect hair in places other than the scalp.

Will PROPECIA work for me?

For most men, PROPECIA increases the number of scalp hairs, helping to fill in thin or balding areas of the scalp. Men taking PROPECIA noted a slowing of hair loss during two years of use. Although results will vary, generally you will not be able to grow back all of the hair you have lost. There is not sufficient evidence that PROPECIA works in the treatment of receding hairline in the temporal area on both sides of the head.

Male pattern hair loss occurs gradually over time. On average, healthy hair grows only about half an inch each month. Therefore, it will take time to see any effect.

You may need to take PROPECIA daily for three months or more before you see a benefit from taking PROPECIA. PROPECIA can only work over the long term if you continue taking it. If the drug has not worked for you in twelve months, further treatment is unlikely to be of benefit. If you stop taking PROPECIA, you will likely lose the hair you have gained within 12 months of stopping treatment. You should discuss this with your doctor.

How should I take PROPECIA?

Follow your doctor's instructions.

- Take one tablet by mouth each day.
- You may take PROPECIA with or without food.
- If you forget to take PROPECIA, do not take an extra tablet. Just take the next tablet as usual.

PROPECIA will not work faster or better if you take it more than once a day.

Who should NOT take PROPECIA?

- PROPECIA is for the treatment of male pattern hair loss in **MEN ONLY** and should not be taken by women or children.
- Anyone allergic to any of the ingredients.

A warning about PROPECIA and pregnancy.

- **Women who are or may potentially be pregnant:**
  - **must not use PROPECIA**
  - **should not handle crushed or broken tablets of PROPECIA.**

If a woman who is pregnant with a male baby absorbs the active ingredient in PROPECIA, either by swallowing or through the skin, it may cause abnormalities of a male baby's sex organs. If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROPECIA, a doctor should be consulted. PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.

What are the possible side effects of PROPECIA?

Like all prescription products, PROPECIA may cause side effects. In clinical studies, side effects from PROPECIA were uncommon and did not affect most men. A small number of men experienced certain sexual side effects. These men reported one or more of the following: less desire for sex; difficulty in achieving an erection; and, a decrease in the amount of semen. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 2% of men. These side effects went away in men who stopped taking PROPECIA. They also disappeared in most men who continued taking PROPECIA.

The active ingredient in PROPECIA is also used by older men at a five-times higher dose to treat enlargement of the prostate. Some of these men reported other side effects, including problems with ejaculation, breast swelling and/or tenderness and allergic reactions such as lip swelling and rash. In clinical studies with PROPECIA, these side effects occurred as often in men taking placebo as in those taking PROPECIA.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual effects.

- **PROPECIA can affect a blood test called PSA (Prostate-Specific Antigen) for the screening of prostate cancer. If you have a PSA test done, you should tell your doctor that you are taking PROPECIA.**

Storage and handling.

Keep PROPECIA in the original container and keep the container closed. Store it in a dry place at room temperature. **PROPECIA tablets are coated and will prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling, provided that the tablets are not broken or crushed.**

Do not give your PROPECIA tablets to anyone else. It has been prescribed only for you. Keep PROPECIA and all medications out of the reach of children.

THIS LEAFLET PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ABOUT PROPECIA. IF AFTER READING THIS LEAFLET YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR ARE NOT SURE ABOUT ANYTHING, ASK YOUR DOCTOR.

1-800-830-7375, Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M. (ET).

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LET'S GET DIGITAL

IN THIS ISSUE, WE'RE PUBLISHING A TWELVE-PAGE Digital section devoted to the exciting new convergence of technology, art, entertainment, communications and life: not just reviews of the newest electronic gear (though there's plenty of cool stuff to read about), but a foray into an emerging culture that touches us all. We wanted a real-life test drive of the latest cell phones, so we rang up the ten-performer, eight-solo-project-cooking, multimedia hip-hop conglomerate known as Wu-Tang Clan, who were already using them and had plenty to say. We interrogated gamesman John Romero, creator of the classics Doom and Quake, about the daunting task of topping himself with his new work in progress, Daikatana. And writer Julian Dibbell, who has covered technology for *Time*, takes up the digital dilemma now facing the music industry: What to do about a new technology that lets people swap recordings for free? ℂ Among the other pieces in the section, writer Steve Morgenstern, who has been covering the RS digital beat for three years, rates sound systems for your computer. Steve began his post-college (Yale '74) life as an editor at the *Guinness Book of World Records* and went on to edit *Atari Age* magazine. His reports there, signed Captain Steve, were read by the first generation of gamers as though they were Talmudic lore. ℂ To this day he has kept the faith, playing for at least ten hours a week. "I don't buy the notion that games are isolated, masturbatory experiences," Steve says. "Kids gather around the computer or the game console to play, ragging on each other, offering tips and immersing themselves in a culture. Where it's getting really interesting now is online multiplayer gaming. But I could care less about killing strangers on the Internet – I want to kill my friends and hear their cries of anguish when I prove my superiority." ℂ Steve spends up to two days of every week meeting with computer and game companies, and then repairs home to write. "A home office is great for my concentration but tough on my marriage," he says. "For the speakers piece in this issue, thirteen big boxes showed up at my door; a PC moved into the living room; and the family suffered through the same piece of *Blade Runner* on DVD, played over and over. My house looks like an electronics warehouse – which is fine with me, but it's not my wife's Martha Stewart fantasy."

—ROBERT LOVE, *Managing Editor*

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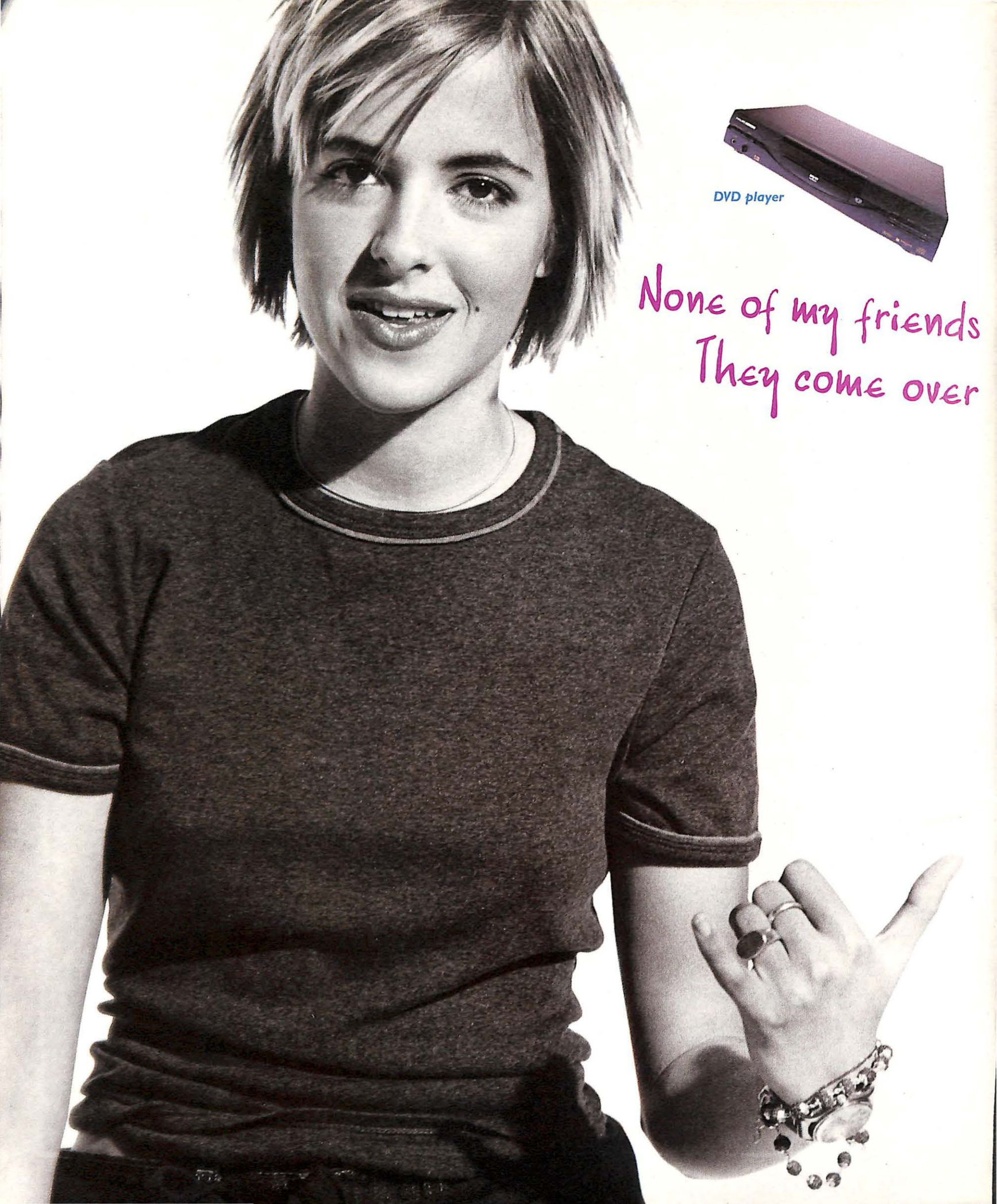
COVER: Photograph of Alanis Morissette by Herb Ritts, Los Angeles, September 1998. Styling by L'Wren Scott for Vernon Jolly Inc. Hair by Peter Savic for Paul Mitchell. Makeup by Joanne Gair for Cloutier/Stila. Manicure by Cecily Carrington for Beauty and Photo. Clothing from Palace Costume. Beaded bracelets from American Rag.

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Ralph J. Gleason 1917-1975



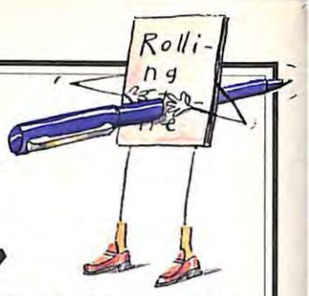
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"If Marilyn Manson's music were half as interesting as his interview, I might actually listen to it."



CORRESPONDENCE, LOVE LETTERS & ADVICE

Marilyn Manson

ENOUGH ALREADY WITH THE Marilyn Manson covers [RS 797]! Every time he's on your cover, I use it to line the bottom of my bird cage. You guys are scaring the hell out of my parrot.

CHRISSIE CLARK
Manahawkin, New Jersey

MARILYN MANSON HAS BEEN the brunt of many prejudices, but honest articles such as Chris Heath's dispel many of them for whoever can get past the cover photo. I found it easy



to let my image of Manson be completely blown. Dare I call the article thought provoking? Mind opening seems more apropos.

MARGARET MCCLOSKEY
Chicago, Illinois

YOU GUYS GIVE WAY TOO MUCH coverage to a piece of tripe like Marilyn Manson. The guy is a joke, and his music sucks. Congratulations on joining the dope show.

MATT SMITH
Charlestown, Massachusetts

THANK YOU FOR GIVING AMERICA's favorite new space oddity his well-deserved second cover. A second ROLLING STONE cover is a special thing; one cover categorizes you as just a passing fad, but that second cover elevates you to the level of a full-blown celebrity.

BRYAN STRATTON
Middlebury, Vermont

IF MARILYN MANSON'S MUSIC were half as interesting as his interview, I might actually listen to it. No such luck.

RYAN KARGEL
Eugene, Oregon



The Cybersex Trial

WHETHER OR NOT OLIVER JOvanovic is guilty, "The Real Story of the Cybersex Trial" is a sad portrait of our legal system [RS 797]. Laws are being created to protect us, but at the same time they are being abused and bent for those vindictive few who need to flaunt their power over others for the sake of self-righteousness.

TIM SCHUTZ
St. Paul, Minnesota

I WANT TO CONGRATULATE PAUL Alexander for his amazing article about the so-called cybersex trial. Not only does he question the judge's and jury's decisions, but he also brings up serious questions about the rape-shield law, which has probably hurt more than it has helped. His was one of the only pieces I've read on the trial that wasn't demeaning toward users of the Internet and that actually raised the possibility that this case was slanted from the start.

ADAM SITNICK
Springfield, Virginia

Jesse Camp

THE ISSUE WITH JESSE CAMP ["The Miseducation of Jesse Camp," RS 797] was the best one yet. As much as I despise MTV, as I'm sure many others do, I watch *Total Request Live* just to catch the few moments when the camera veers from Joe Schmo Carson to Jesse, the porcupinelike creature standing taller than anyone else in Times Square.

KATE MONTGOMERY
Omaha, Nebraska

SO KURT LODER-SAURUS THOUGHT that Jesse Camp was "kind of annoying"? What's the matter, Kurt – doesn't Jesse go well with your tea and crumpets in the afternoon? Jesse Camp is the first new and fresh person whom MTV has "used" in years.

DAN SIEGENFELD
Briarcliff Manor, New York

Dangerous Minds

THE TRUE FACE OF ACADEMIA was exposed in your article "Dangerous Minds" [RS 797]. I've discovered as a grad student that academics are often most interested in debating silly issues that are totally insignificant to all but a handful of people. I doubt that most ordinary people give a crap about the latest postmodern deconstruction or whatever is hot in academic circles. Academia has become a smug, elitist, closed-minded and, dare I say, irrelevant institution. Way to go, Alan Sokal!

ROGER DIERCKS
Plainfield, Illinois

AS A COLLEGE STUDENT, I APPRECiate learning from the "radical" professors like those you profiled. They encourage us to think for ourselves and challenge everything we're told instead



of swallowing it mindlessly. We owe them thanks, not threats, whether they're right wing or leftists. (Go, left!)

JASON JOHNS
Toledo, Ohio

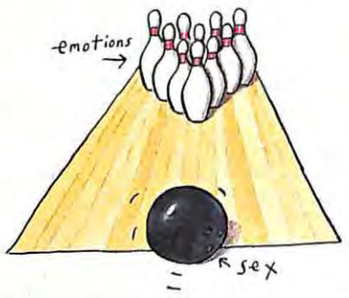
Wooing the Geeks

THANK YOU FOR MENTIONING Habitat for Humanity in "The Seduction of Bryon Krug" [RS 797]. However, Jeff Goodell referred to us as "Jimmy Carter's organization"; while President Carter is a faithful supporter and our most famous volunteer, Habitat was, in fact, founded by Millard Fuller, along with his wife, Linda, in 1976.

DWIGHT OZARD
Habitat for Humanity
Americus, Georgia

The Joy of No Sex

I WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE article "The Joy of No Sex" [RS 797]. For someone like myself, who has always believed that sex is better with someone you are committed to and in love with, this is an affirmation. And now I can say that it isn't just a nice thought but some-



thing for real. I think that too many people separate the physical act of sex from the emotions that should be a part of it. This article may give confirmation to anyone struggling with the choice to hold out for the "real" thing.

KIRSTEN STORMO
Everett, Washington

The Goo Goo Dolls

AT FIRST WHEN I SAW THAT THE Goo Goo Dolls were featured in your magazine [RS Style, RS 797], I was happy; but then I was appalled to find that you showed Johnny Rzeznik only. What about Robbie Takac and Mike Malinin? They're just as important, and without them, there wouldn't be any Goo Goo Dolls. When you do a story on a band, you really should showcase the entire band and not just one member.

JEN BARUD
Des Moines, Iowa

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DRAWINGS BY JAMES T. PENDERGRAST


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RANDOM NOTES

BY ANTHONY BOZZA

"We called my backup singers a Tramp, a Drunk and an Unfit Mother," said former Eurythmic **DAVE STEWART**. That'd be **NATALIE IMBRUGLIA**, **KYLIE MINOGUE** and **SINÉAD O'CONNOR**, respectively, who appeared with him on the British TV show *TFI Friday*. "I'm doing all sorts of mysterious appearances in various forms," Stewart explained, apparently unaware that *he* was the only one not in costume that night. But wait – there's more weirdness. Stewart will tour the world performing only in phone booths. How, you ask? He'll set up his gear, start playing and simultaneously broadcast the gig over the Internet. Stewart will then emerge as Superman and fly away.



Trick or treat? O'Connor, Imbruglia, Stewart and Minogue (from left) wigged out on the British TV show "TFI Friday."



To bring you my album: P.J. Harvey delivers the new stuff to Los Angeles.

POLLY JEAN HARVEY previewed her first U.S. tour in three years at Los Angeles' Viper Room. Everything was fine until she and the band played "Down by the Water." "Oh, Jesus, help me," she sang, "help me . . . remember the words," which set off a round of giggles onstage. Before leaving town, she did a short set in a dangerously packed Virgin Megastore. Red Hot Chili Pepper **ANTHONY KIEDIS** was ushered to a pit reserved for contest winners (and he's not even on Virgin Records) to enjoy the gig. And did he. "P.J. Harvey makes my brain go funny and my heart all swollen," he swooned. "I'm just madly in love with her."

"I know the guys in **BILE** from around and stuff," explained MTV's **JESSE CAMP** after the thrash-metal band's set at New York's Webster Hall. "I don't really know 'em so well as guys, but we bump into each other. Their music is genuine, and that's all that counts." Soon the tables may be turned. Hold on to your hair spray, kids: Jesse Camp has a band – and he sings. "We're called Jesse and the Eighth Street Kidz," he says. "We're like Aerosmith and the New York Dolls for the next millennium – just good rock & roll music, like Kiss, Hanoi Rocks, the Rolling Stones. Our record is like the New York scene right now. I can play it for you over the phone?" Hold on, Jesse, that's my other line.

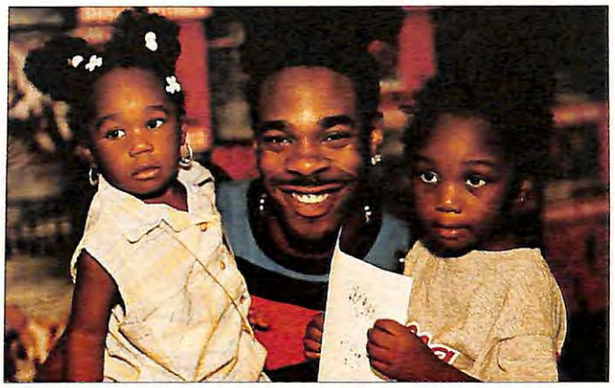


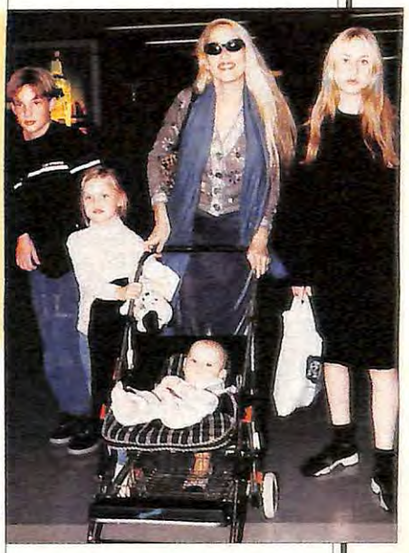
It ain't easy being green: Bile and Jesse, camping it up in New York.



All in a day's work: Busta and Flipmode Squad greet their public.

At **FLIPMODE SQUAD**'s autograph session at a Wiz store in the Bronx, **BUSTA RHYMES** went from holding babies to signing boobies. "After the girl did that, she posed for a picture directly in front of me," said Flipmode's female lieutenant, **RAH DIGGA**. "She bends over, and I thought she wanted *me* to sign them. I was like, 'Whoa, don't even go there.' " Rah Digga's male counterparts felt a bit differently. "We for the people," **RAMPAGE** said. "We'll sign breasts, ass, whatever." **BUSTA** concurs: "Flipmode is the squad, representing for the whole spectrum of fans." And that includes exhibitionists.





The Jaggers: James, Georgia May, Hall, Gabriel, Elizabeth Scarlett (from left)

The **JAGGER** clan winged it all the way from its hometown of London to Istanbul to see Papa Mick and the boys rock the casbah. Mom **JERRY HALL** brought the entire family along for the ride: **JAMES**, **ELIZABETH SCARLETT**, **GEORGIA MAY** and baby **GABRIEL**. After all, the family that rocks together stays together.

NICK FALZERANO/MAZUR; DAVE PARKER/ALPHA GLOBE; DELPHINE FAWUNDI; FRANK WHITE; TOM HOWARD (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT)



Are they not men? Josh Freese, Jerry Casale, Bob Mothersbaugh, Spade, Bob Casale and Mark Mothersbaugh (from left).

RANDOM NOTES

When a lot of these guys in the audience were in junior high and getting beat up because they were different, they were listening to Devo," said Devo frontman **MARK MOTHERSBAUGH** of the crowd at Silicon Planet Experience '98. "Now they've shown they were right about the direction the world was going." Held deep within a former tank factory in San Jose, California, the benefit for a local AIDS clinic looked like a rave tailor-made for Cali mouse clickers – there were interactive displays, a cigar lounge, a martini bar and a boxing ring full of (hired) freaky dancers. **DAVID SPADE** opened the evening's entertainment with a set of politically incorrect comedy before reunited New Wave geek gods Devo played hits like "Whip It" and "Girl U Want." The night was topped off by **BECK**, who was joined onstage by a moon-walking Spade. "People keep mistaking me for Beck," said Spade. "We're both these squirrelly little greasy guys."



Say heck no to techno: DJ Spooky gets illbient at New York's Irving Plaza.

It's crucial to have a show not be just a normal music thing with trendy big beats," said the theory-spouting, record-slinging self-proclaimed "artist-intellectual" **DJ SPOOKY** of the electronica forum he participated in before a recent party for Absolut Vodka's new DJ-centric Web site. "But it's a sticking point with my critics." Hey, no problem – a glassful of vodka helps the theory go down. After the lecture, Spooky got behind his jumble of samplers, turntables and instruments to do his thing: "I use samples to create plurality. My stuff isn't meant for trendy club people. Anybody can sample anything, but it's an empty gesture if you can't deal with the people." OK, then – who needs another martini?

"He was wearing more makeup than me, and it scared me."

Marilyn Manson

ON HIS "LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN" APPEARANCE



Baby, I'm a star: Fogerty with wife Julie.

It's official: **JOHN FOGERTY** has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, in Los Angeles. "It's amazing," Fogerty said. "It's like baseball players making it into the Hall of Fame: Some are obvious choices, and some get missed for unknown reasons. But it's better to be in than not." He commemorated the event with his wife, **JULIE**, and their two kids. "It was really important that my family be there," he said. "I wanted the little kids to stand there, look at the star and to make tribute to my wife. She's the real star of the family."

Country rockers **STEVE EARLE**, **EMMYLOU HARRIS**, **WILLIE NELSON** and **LUCINDA WILLIAMS** joined **SHERYL CROW** for a benefit concert at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., to raise money and awareness for the fight against land mines, which continue to injure or kill about 25,000 innocents per year. "We want to make the world a better place for people who don't have the freedom to walk outside their homes," Harris said from the stage. "The only reason land mines still exist," Williams said after the show, "is because the masters of war are still in control of this country."



Harris, Williams and Earle in Washington, D.C., campaigning for a mine-free world



THE SHRIEKS OF NUBILE MUSIC FANS THREATENED TO SHATTER THE glass at New York's Windows on the World when 'N Sync played for 150 lucky Twix-contest winners. After they danced through three numbers, 'N Sync posed with some trembling admirers. "We're the kind of group who's gonna be around for a while," said a confident Lance Bass, 19, "like the Stones. Olivia Newton-John likes us. We've become good friends with Rob from Matchbox 20, and Method Man really enjoys our music." Sorry, Lance, we went to the source. "Who that?" Meth asked. "They hip-hop?"

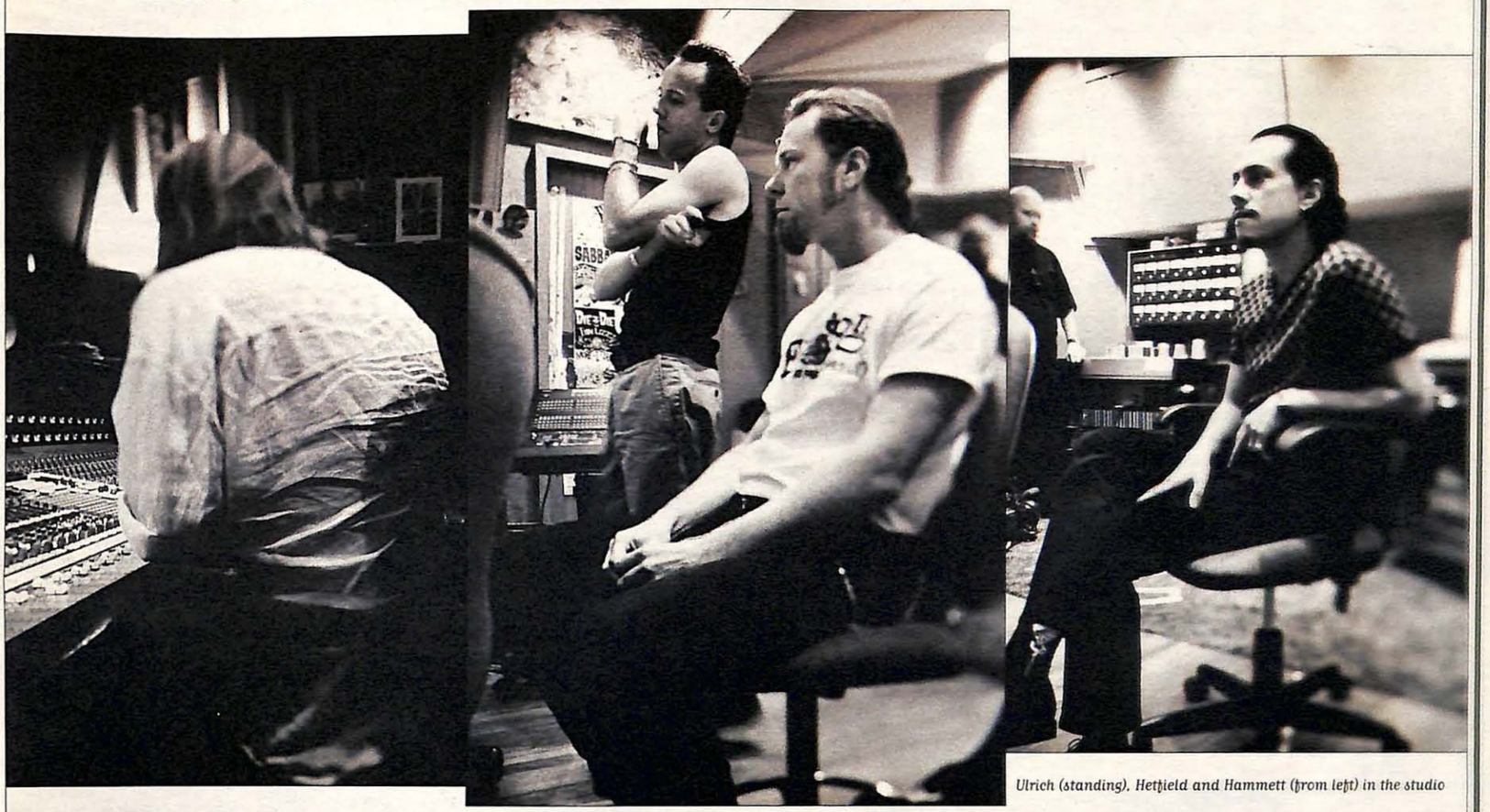
JAY BLAKESBERG; ERIC CHARBONNEAU/BERLINER STUDIO; COURTESY OF RCA; KEVIN MAZUR (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP)

"When we put this band together, it was never about making records. It was about playing songs in a garage." —*Lars Ulrich, 1988*

ROCK & ROLL

METALLICA'S HISTORY LESSON

AFTER A TWO-YEAR TOUR, METALLICA TOOK A BREAK – NOT TO REST BUT TO RECORD "GARAGE INC.," AN ALBUM WITH TWENTY-SEVEN TRACKS OF THEIR FAVORITE METAL AND PUNK SONGS. AND ONE BY BOB SEGER



Ulrich (standing), Hetfield and Hammett (from left) in the studio

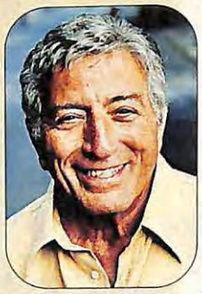
BY LORRAINE ALI

INSIDE THE PLANT – THE SAUSALITO, CALIfornia, studio where Metallica are recording their new album, *Garage Inc.* – singer James Hetfield's dastardly growl seeps out of the speakers into the control room. "There's a devil waiting outside your door," he seethes in "Loverman." Kirk Hammett's guitar creates a slow, slippery backdrop to the murderous lyrics, while Jason Newsted's bass creeps alongside. Though the song sounds quintessentially Metallica, these are not Hetfield's nightmarish lyrics or the band's apocalyptic songcraft. This is the work of another sinister mind: Nick Cave. In fact, the entire album, out November 24th, comprises old and new recordings of the band performing other artists' songs – from reworked tunes by Motörhead, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Diamond Head to medleys of songs by Black Sabbath, Blue Öyster Cult and the blood-spitting metal band Mercyful Fate.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW WELCH

WHAT'S GOING ON

The World of Rock & Roll, November 26th – December 10th



11/29 *Tony Bennett: Storytellers for VH1 Save the Music* (VH1 and Nickelodeon) – Surely one of the year's oddest teamups: Bennett, hot on the heels of his album of songs for children, *The Playground*, and the Backstreet Boys perform for an all-kid audience. **12/1** *The Rockin' '50s*, by Brock Helander (Schirmer Books) – An encyclopedia-style archive of the shakers, rattlers and rollers of rock's infancy, with biographies, discographies and photos. **12/1-12/8** Sweet Relief holiday ornament auction (*www.bhauction.com*) – This Internet auction of celebrity memorabilia and personalized Christmas decorations will raise money for musicians in need. Among the potential donors: Beck, Leonardo DiCaprio, Madonna, Beastie Boys and Cameron Diaz. **12/8** Foxy Brown, *Chyna Doll* (Violator/Def Jam) – The latest set of sultry grooves from hip-hop's favorite teenage tease. Busta Rhymes, *E.L.E.* (Elektra) – That's Extinction Level Event. Prepare for another collection of explosive hip-hop from the dreadlocked wonder, with guest appearances by Jay-Z, Janet Jackson and Ozzy Osbourne. *No Limit Soldiers Compilation: We Can't Be Stopped* (No Limit/Priority) – Master P, Snoop Dogg, Silkk the Shocker, Mia X and the rest of the No Limit army assemble for this hip-hop boot-camp collection of all-new tracks. –NOAH TARNOW

@ Rolling Stone Online

11/12 9 P.M. EST (approximate) The Afghan Whigs (*below*) heat up your desktop with soulful and salacious songs live from cyberspace. **11/13** Check Web site for time. Jam-band devotees will savor this date with moe., who are touring in support of *Tin Cans and Car Tires*. To take in the shows, surf to *www.rollingstone.com* and make sure you have the latest version of RealPlayer.



ROLLING STONE ON TV

MTV is where it's at for ROLLING STONE's thirtieth-anniversary special. *Where It's At: The Rolling Stone State of the Union* will air on the video channel on November 20th at 8 P.M. and again on November 22nd at 11 A.M. The two-hour program – directed by Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky, Emmy winners for their documentary *Paradise Lost* – provides an edgy look at pop culture as young people speak about religion, sex, spirituality and the complex issues they're facing. Included are live performances (filmed specially for ROLLING STONE) from Jewel, Beck and Bruce Springsteen, as well as interviews with an array of pop-culture icons, among them Beastie Boys, Keith Richards, Michael Douglas, Johnny Depp and Marilyn Manson.



"We started as a cover band in 1981, and I still feel comfortable playing those songs," says drummer Lars Ulrich. "It's fun to be able to get to the point where we can do this and not be locked into building a career – to be able to do what you want, when you want, how you want. In order for us to continue as a unit, we need this kind of freedom."

The album, co-produced by Bob Rock (of past Metallica and Mötley Crüe fame), boasts eleven new recordings and sixteen tracks laid down over the course of Metallica's career. Many of the early covers are taken from rare B sides. And though Metallica had put out an EP of covers, *The $5.98 EP: Garage Days Re-Revisited*, in 1987, they felt it was time to gather those and other tracks as an ode to their song-stealing past.

"We used to play songs by obscure English bands no one here knew of, and people would go, 'Wow, you guys are great!' " explains Hetfield. "They didn't know, and we didn't tell 'em. We eventually started writing our own songs and using those covers as B sides. When we put out *Garage Days*, it was six cover songs we loved, but now we decided to collect and record more. It's like a tribute to where we came from."

"We used to play songs by English bands no one knew of," explains Hetfield. "This record is like a tribute to where we came from."

But Metallica, perhaps rock's hardest-working band, haven't had a lot of time to ponder their past. In fact, the band has largely been on the road since the '96 release of *Load* and took less than a month off before dropping in to the studio to make *Garage Inc.* The timetable for the album? Record, mix and master in three weeks – breakneck, even for Metallica.

One reason the band members decided to record close to their Northern California homes was so that new fathers Hetfield and Ulrich could be near their daughter and son, respectively, who were born two months apart. Now, in between discussions of reverb and riffs, Hetfield talks about the pros and cons of breast milk vs. formula, and Ulrich discusses the beauty of backstage bottle feedings.

"Yeah, there's a lot of *goo goo, ga ga* and boasting," Hetfield laughs. " 'My kid's doing this; what's yours doing?' 'My baby's fetchin' me beers, and she's only four months old!' I'm a proud dad."

Fatherhood and music may be the only things Hetfield and Ulrich have in common. Hetfield rolls up to the studio on a custom Harley, wearing a Hot Wheels racing cap, jeans and motorcycle boots. Ulrich arrives in a black Mercedes, wearing a black tank top, Italian loafers and designer jewelry. Hetfield talks bike parts; Ulrich talks stocks. These clashes have contributed to Metallica's success – initially making their music far more diverse than that of their big-haired peers and spawning a creative tension that has helped keep the band interesting over the years. But these differences also make the writing and recording of most Metallica albums an arduous process.

"That's the beauty of this album – there's stuff recorded in one take," says Ulrich, sitting on a bench outside the secluded studio. "For Eddie Vedder to say that is one thing; for me to say that – from how we dissect our records, how we analyze every snare hit, every guitar note – it's another. Here, we did eleven drum tracks in five days. On normal Metallica projects, we don't even load the equipment into the studio in five days."

Though the tracks range from pummeling punk songs by bands like the Misfits to the Southern rock of Skynyrd, there is a unifying thread that drew Metallica to each of them, a certain gruff heartiness at each song's core. "The distance between a lot of the songs shortens musically because of the attitude in there," says Ulrich. "When you hear a guy like Hetfield sing [Bob Seger's] 'Turn the Page,' then go into a Discharge song, to my ears it sounds natural.

"There's certain bands – Blue Öyster Cult, Diamond Head, Misfits – that we play really well," Ulrich adds. "We don't have to force it – we sit down and just go. Then there's something like 'Turn the Page,' where it's more about the song than the artist. I've heard that song a million times, but I remember clearly when I was driving in my car, it was on the radio, and I really listened and thought, 'That song has Hetfield written all over it – that song would be really great to fuck with someday,' though I couldn't imagine in my wildest nightmare having to cover any other Bob Seger song."

In addition to *Garage Inc.*, Metallica will release on December 8th *Cunning Stunts*, a DVD from a 1997 concert stop in Fort Worth, Texas. Fans will be able to watch the show on their home computers and zoom in on the stage from different angles, go backstage and pan over the audience. "We've done just about everything there is to do, so we're always looking for ways to keep things fresh," says Ulrich.

As he's talking, a woman suddenly approaches out of nowhere and begins chatting to the drummer as if she's known him since childhood. It soon becomes clear that she's been loitering outside the studio, waiting to meet the band. "This studio is not the best-kept secret in the world," Ulrich explains later. "You walk out at five in the morning and there will be three guys out here with a cooler of beer, going, '*Duuude*, let's party!' " He laughs. "There are just some Metallica things that never change." ♫

THE LONG ROAD BACK TO HELL

Manson tour starts; so does the trouble

CAN A MAN WITH FAKE BREASTS BE THAT scary? Right-wing religious groups and some conservative politicians seem to think so. The man in question is Marilyn Manson, and his current tour has people up in arms. Syracuse, New York, Mayor Roy Bernardi was the first politico to dis Manson, asking officials at the Landmark Theater to consider canceling Manson's November 19th show there. "[Manson] preaches hate and killing," says Bernardi, who admits he has never seen Manson perform. "I'd rather not see it in my community." But Landmark Theater board chairman John Sposato says, "This show is going to go on. We don't judge the content of any act that plays our theater." Manson's twenty-date theater tour began on October 26th in Kansas City, Kansas, and will conclude on November 23rd in New York.



Coming to a town near you!

Manson's last tour, in the spring of 1997, was plagued by protests in various cities, including La Crosse, Wisconsin, and Biloxi, Mississippi. Right-wing groups sent information packets – which contained false accounts of rape and drug use during Manson's shows – to officials in cities along the tour's route. These groups are preparing to wage the same campaign against Manson this time out. "Sometimes things went out that weren't true," admits Don Jackson, president of the Christian Family Network, which took part in last year's anti-Manson campaign. "But there was self-mutilation and tearing up of Bibles. The public has a need and a right to know." Jackson says he was "disgusted" by the Manson show he saw in 1997. "He takes things to an extreme," he says. "We're not encouraging people to protest, just to make an informed decision."

The Manson camp does not seem bothered by the election-year hullabaloo. "Buildings that initially said no to the show have changed their minds," says Manson's booking agent, Alex Kochan, citing the Fox Theater in St. Louis as one example. "We're in all of the buildings and cities that we wanted to play." Manson is also set to do a New Year's Eve gig in Las Vegas, and he will launch the tour's second U.S. leg in February or March. "It's rock theater," says Ted Mankin, a promoter of Manson shows. "Manson won't bring Armageddon. Everyone is safe." –MATT HENDRICKSON

MARK SELIGER (BENNETT); MARINA CHAVEZ (AFGHAN WHIGS); KEVIN MAZUR (MANSON)



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VIRGINIA SLIMS

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THE TEEN BEAT

FROM PHONE CARDS TO FASHION SHOWS – FIVE RECORD-COMPANY SCHEMES TO TAP THE YOUTH MARKET

"ONE OF THE MOST FUNdamental rules of marketing and advertising for teens is to hit them where they are," says Michael Wood, spokesman for the marketing firm Teenage Research Unlimited. "But teens today are bombarded with so many messages, it has become necessary for marketeers to hit them from a number of different sides." And hit them they do: With cross-promotions and joint marketing efforts, record companies are finding innovative ways to make their bands stand out among the more than 30,000 albums released each year. Here are five examples of teen-marketing synergy at work.

PAGERS When *Teen* magazine's 2 million readers turned to Page 91 of the August issue, they found an ad offering an enticing deal: Order twelve months of pager service from Motorola and get a free pager and a sampler cassette from Virgin Records' British boy trio 911.

But the shrewdest part of the offer is left unmentioned: Once a teen signs up with Motorola, the company has the participant's pager number on file – information that Motorola shares with its ad partner Virgin. So the next time 911 are performing near a fan's area code, Virgin can automatically page her, leaving an 800 number blinking on her LCD. A call to the toll-free number will trigger a recorded message with information on where the band is playing and how to purchase tickets. Col. Tom Parker, meet Ma Bell.









PHONE CARDS When Mervyn's California, a huge department-store chain, went looking for ways to get more teen customers into its junior departments Gear and e-factor, it turned to entertainment consultant Mark Owens, whose company, Davie-Brown, proposed a combination of two teen favorites – phones and music. Everyone who spent twenty-five dollars or more at Gear or e-factor during the back-to-school season got a ten-minute Sprint Prepaid Foncard emblazoned with the likeness of Lisa Loeb, Robyn, Next or Dakota Moon. Each time the card is used, the caller hears the music of, say, Lisa Loeb, and can get info on Mervyn's latest sale. And in this truly multifaced promotion, the customer also receives a discount coupon to buy Lisa Loeb's music at Sam Goody.

CATALOGS "Partly by accident, we created a new way for music to be marketed to teens," says Matt Diamond, co-founder of *Alloy*, a clothing catalog sent out monthly to 2.5 million teenagers.

Mercury Records noticed *Alloy*'s enormous database and saw a chance to promote twenty-three-year-old singer-songwriter Emm Gryner. "We're doing a bounce-back mailing with *Alloy*," says Gwynne Puentevella, marketing coordinator at Mercury. "Anyone who orders merchandise from *Alloy* gets an Emm Gryner cassette sampler in the mail." And that's not all: Dial *Alloy*'s toll-free number and you'll hear an excerpt from Gryner's "Summerlong"; click on *www.alloyonline.com* to read a Gryner interview or to watch snippets of her video; or open *Alloy*'s winter catalog, where Gryner makes her modeling debut.

VIDEO GAMES For the past year, the Outpost/Geffen techno act the Crystal Method have turned up everywhere. The L.A. duo's pumping synthesizers popped up on the soundtracks to *Spawn* and *Lost in Space* and in ads for Mazda and Gap khakis. This summer ten of their tunes became the soundtrack for N_2O: Nitrous Oxide, a Sony PlayStation video game developed by Fox Interactive.

"The demographic (ages twelve to twenty-two) for video games and certain kinds of music are almost identical," says Jon Richmond, president of Fox Interactive. "We wound up sponsoring Crystal Method's summer tour and sending game kiosks on the road with them."

Scott Kirkland, one half of the Method, sees it likewise: "With MTV not playing anything cutting edge nowadays, when somebody asks us to work on a commercial or a video game, we take a look at it. Hopefully it brings new fans to electronic music. On the other hand, there are probably some kids out there who dislike us and have the MUTE button pressed the whole time they're playing."

MALL TOURS Though Britney Spears' debut album isn't due until January, a multipronged promotional push is already in full swing. Spears will appear on the cover of *Just Nikki*'s holiday '98 catalog and Sunglass Hut's pre-holiday CD. Her single "Soda Pop" is on the *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* album, and she appeared with label mates Backstreet Boys on Hasbro Interactive's GirlTalk CD-ROM. (The toy company got the Boys provided that they took Spears as well.)

Spears (*left*) has also performed at six *Seventeen* magazine-sponsored mall tours in which cosmetics and clothing companies (like L'Oréal and Benetton) put on fashion shows for hundreds of girls. A couple of artists who were building their fan base on mall tours just a few years ago: Brandy and Backstreet Boys. –JEFF SALAMON

»JOHNNY CASH AILING



JOHNNY CASH HAD TO POSTPONE work on his next album because of his continuing battle with Shy-Drager syndrome, a degenerative disorder of the nervous system. On October 2nd, Cash was released from a Nashville hospital after a bout of pneumonia. According to his manager, the singer had been preparing to work on his next record with producer Rick Rubin. But the outlook is not good. Shy-Drager is untreatable – only its symptoms, which include muscle rigidity and tremors, can be tempered with drugs – and causes gradual debilitation of the body. –MATT HENDRICKSON

»CHARLIE FOXX (1939-1998)



CHARLIE FOXX, ONE HALF OF THE R&B vocal team Inez and Charlie Foxx, died of leukemia on September 18th in Mobile, Alabama. Originally from Greensboro, North Carolina, Foxx and his sister Inez signed to the Symbol label in 1962. They had the biggest hit of their career the next year with "Mockingbird," an adaptation of a children's song. It was a Top Ten hit on both the pop and the R&B charts; "Mockingbird" reached the pop charts again in 1974 when it was covered by James Taylor and Carly Simon. The Foxx team had other hits throughout the Sixties, including "Ask Me," "Hurt by Love" and "(1-2-3-4-5-6-7) Count the Days." –STEVE FUTTERMAN

»HALL OF FAME NOMINEES ANNOUNCED



BRUCE SPRINGsteen (*top*), Billy Joel and Black Sabbath head this year's list of nominees for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Other nominees include Paul McCartney (who is already in the Hall with the Beatles), Curtis Mayfield (*middle*), Steely Dan, Dusty Springfield (*bottom*), Darlene Love, Gene Pitney, the Flamingos, Solomon Burke, the Staple Singers, the Moonglows, Ritchie Valens and Del Shannon. Approximately 800 voters will choose up to seven of the nominees for induction.

RUVEN AFANADOR/OUTLINE (CASH); MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES (FOXX); CHUCK PULIN/STARFILE (SPRINGSTEEN, MAYFIELD AND SPRINGFIELD)

THE RISE OF THE EIGHTY-DOLLAR CONCERT SWEAT SHIRT

BACKSTREET BOYS AND 'N SYNC SEND ROCK MERCHANDISING THROUGH THE ROOF

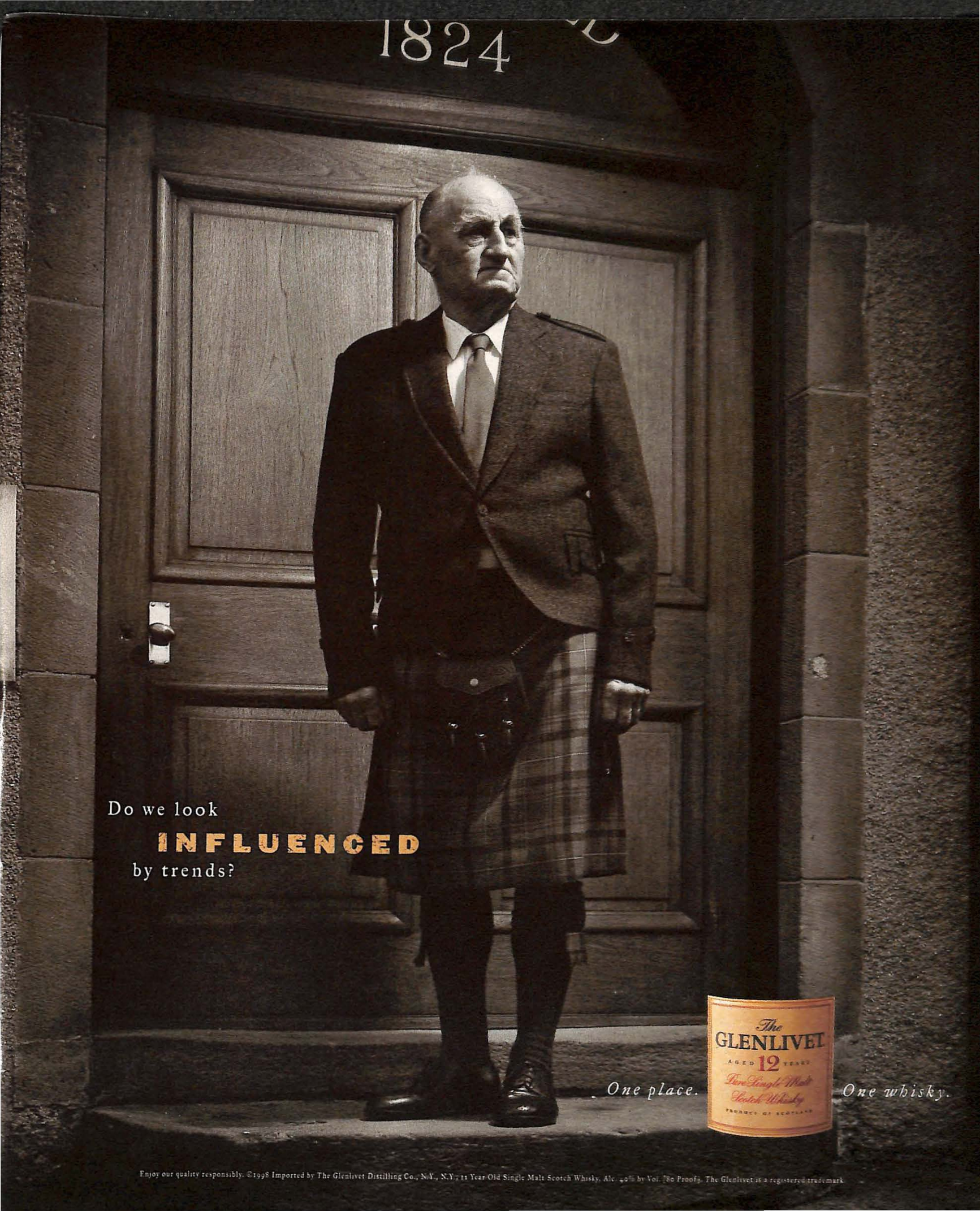


SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BETTINA JENSEN IS A Backstreet Boys fan, and she's willing to spend the money to prove it. A quick check of her BSB inventory reveals more than a hundred posters, seven books, two pillows, ten videos, five shirts, three LPs, twelve singles, three calendars, two hats, three scarves and scores of necklaces and bracelets. The damage to date: almost $1,500.

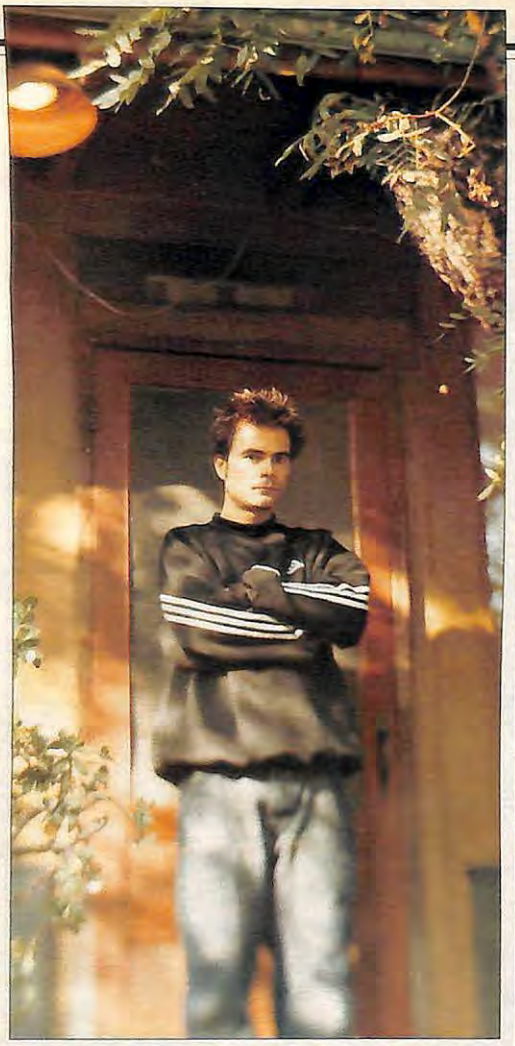
The pop phenomenon sparked first by Hanson and the Spice Girls and now by a new crop of boy bands has young fans shelling out babysitting money at a furious pace. And they're splurging not just on albums and concert tickets but on all varieties of must-have merchandise, from jackets and hats to watches and notebooks. Winterland Productions, which was started by Grateful Dead promoter Bill Graham in 1972, is enjoying one of its best years ever – thanks to its licensing agreements with 'N Sync and Backstreet Boys. The new teen purchasing power is music to the ears of concert merchandisers, who limped through the anti-commercial alternative-rock years, watching fans file out of clubs and arenas empty-handed.

The new philosophy seems to be "buy early and often." While the industry estimates that fans spend an average of three dollars on merchandise per concert, this summer Backstreet Boys took in thirteen dollars per person, thanks to a twenty-two-item product line that includes spaghetti-strap T-shirts ($18), hooded fleece shirts ($80) and calendars ($13). Thirteen dollars times 16,000 fans equals $208,000 in merchandising sales per sold-out performance, though up to forty percent goes to the venue. Still more money is made at retail outlets such as JCPenney, where Winterland and others market elaborate pop-music product lines that include jeans and school supplies. –ERIC BOEHLERT

PAGER PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVIES + STARR



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Ross Robinson: "I'm just trying to get what I crave."

MAD MAN

KORN AND VANILLA ICE PRODUCER ROSS ROBINSON THROWS TANTRUMS, SCREAMS AND PUNCHES GUITARISTS – ANYTHING TO GET THE SOUND HE WANTS

ROSS ROBINSON IS THE ONLY RECORD PRODUCER WHO gets paid to beat up guitar players and throw flowerpots against studio walls. And with his track record, it's not like anyone is complaining, either. Ross' bullying tactics have already prodded Korn, Sepultura and Limp Bizkit to platinum glory; now the former speedcore guitarist turned God-fearing hitmaker can afford to call his own shots, however painful they might be.

"I'm just trying to get what I crave," says Robinson, who is a native of Barstow, California. "I want to get into the musicians' heads and make them feel where their music comes from – and sometimes you have to push them hard to make that happen."

Robinson's gonzo studio technique is so unconventional that some would say it can hardly be considered producing at all. Rather than keep himself at a safe remove behind the control-room glass, Robinson prefers to mix it up in the tracking room with the musicians, where he dictates the action with a combination of brute force and psychological warfare. "I'll throw shit across the room, push people on the ground, punch guitar players and make them lose their place in the song," says Robinson. "I climbed on top of [Korn singer] Jonathan Davis once and dug my thumbs into his neck, trying to get the vibe out of him."

Robinson used some twisted tough love while producing Vanilla Ice's new aggro-metal album, *Hard to Swallow*. "Ice came into the studio all depressed one day, 'cause he's got some heavy family issues," says Robinson. "So I got him to sit down and write a song about it. Turned out to be one of the best things on the album."

Vanilla Ice agrees. "Ross is like a mad scientist," he says. "He was just able to pull stuff out of me. Making this record with him was like a cathartic process."

For all his roughneck behavior, Robinson attributes his approach to a higher source. "Music is all God-based," the thirty-one-year-old producer says. "There hasn't been a song that wasn't written by God and for God's spirit, through us, to remind us of what that spirit is. I'm just trying to communicate that feeling and get it from the artist's heart to the spirit of the listener." –MARC WEINGARTEN

THE FATHER OF INVENTION

DRILLS, BALLOONS, DOOR BUZZERS – BRAZILIAN TOM ZÉ CAN TURN ANYTHING INTO MUSIC

SO MUCH FOR BEING where the action is. In a rare turn of events, underground pop's latest hero – he's the fascination of young sonic explorers like Tortoise, Stereolab and Sean Lennon – is a classically trained sixty-two-year-old from the back country of Brazil's northeastern interior.



Tom Zé is the pop underground's unlikely new hero.

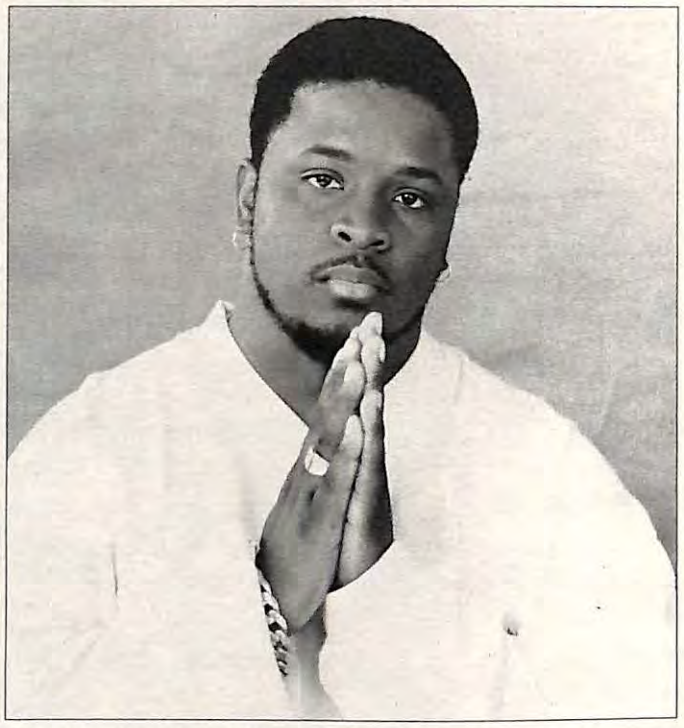
As part of the Tropicalia movement – a group of late-Sixties intellectual hippies dedicated to crossing psychedelia with their own Afro-Brazilian heritage – Tom Zé belonged to one of rock's richest, and most short-lived, subcultures. But rather than slowly go mainstream, as did his colleagues Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and Gal Costa, Zé burrowed deep into the wood pile. He built his own instruments, including a tape-cuing machine operated by door buzzers. He accompanied his pop songs with the sounds of drills and floor polishers and bicycle pumps, and even though he began these experiments twenty-five years ago, Zé's weird little songs sound completely modern. Zé even blushes at the suggestion that the funky "Gene," the leadoff song on his new album, *Fabrication Defect*, sounds up to the minute. "I'm just playing at being a real human being," he says while sitting in a New York studio. "I'm so distant from these things. Centuries away."

Fabrication Defect, Zé's second album since he resurfaced in 1991 via the patronage of David Byrne, sounds almost proto-Timbaland, with a pile of playful rapping, plucked guitars, sampled drums, invented instruments (the drills; balloons rubbed against the teeth) and Brazilian percussion. Like all his work, it's rhythmically addictive, funny and a bit childlike, and it approaches pop from scratch.

None of this is lost on his admirers. "We love Tom Zé," says Lennon, in the studio with his girlfriend, Yuka Honda of Cibo Matto, working on his contribution to *Post Modern Platos*, a remix album of the new Zé songs. "It's our favorite kind of music – so politically conscious, so smart," he marvels. "It was so different from all the classic bossa nova of the time – much more experimental."

Zé himself is still getting used to the adulation. "I'm a little stunned by this process," he says of the remixes. "But I'm happy. If I understood how the young people see it, then they wouldn't be young." –BEN RATLIFF

ON THE RADIO



"I bring an old-school vibe with a new-school appeal to it," says Pressha.

PRESSHA

"Splackavellie"

PRESSHA COOKER: A blunt paean to justified adultery, the sly, smooth R&B of "Splackavellie" has pushed Pressha to Number Thirty on *Billboard*'s Hot 100 Singles chart. "If you have a relationship and one of the parties isn't holding up his or her end of the deal, be careful," warns Atlanta's Pressha (né David Jones), "because you got many brothers and sisters that'll pick up the slack."

UNDER PRESSHA: "Splackavellie" is "more or less an outlet from a bad situation," Pressha explains. "There was a slang term used in Atlanta called *splack*, which meant to get your groove on, sex, whatever you want to call it. Then *Makaveli*, from the late Tupac. And we just put the two together." Was the song a product of personal experience? "Let's just say I've straddled both sides of that fence," he says. "I know the situation from both angles. I have been the splackavellie, and I have been gotten by the splackavellie."

PRESSH YA LUCK: Pressha started out working for Tony Mercedes Records before making the leap to R&B crooning. "I was doing production for Tony's label, and I was on my way out of town with an artist, and I accidentally left my demo tape in the van," he says. "When I came back, Tony had gotten the tape and let L.A. Reid [of LaFace Records] hear it. And he loved it, and he offered me a deal with LaFace on the spot."

PRESSHA DROPS: "I was onstage doing a dance routine, and I split my pants. Somebody jumped up out of the crowd and grabbed my pants – split 'em the rest of the way. They were hanging off like a skirt. Thank God my underwear was clean." –NOAH TARNOW

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEAN DUNGAN (ROBINSON) AND ERIC JOHNSON (ZÉ)



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PUNK'S CAMERAMAN

PHOTOGRAPHER GLEN FRIEDMAN'S NEW BOOK LOOKS BACK TO WHEN SKATE, PUNK AND RAP FIRST MET

"I GIVE PEOPLE PROBAbly more attitude than they give me," photographer Glen E. Friedman says, explaining his artistic MO. "I've seen some really important shit, so you are not impressing me – I don't give a fuck who you are." Hubris aside, Friedman has, in fact, experienced the most significant youth-culture earthquakes of the past two decades, and he's got the pictures to prove it. He was just thirteen when *SkateBoarder* magazine published his photos back in 1976; since then, his album covers and magazine shots – compiled in three books: *Fuck You Heroes*; its sequel, *Fuck You Too*; and his new collection, from Consafos/Burning Flags Press, *The Idealist* – have moved beyond skateboarding to intimately capture seemingly every punk-rock legend and hip-hop innovator. "Where *Fuck You Heroes* documented my life and three things – skating, punk rock, hip-hop – that have shaped culture, *The Idealist* is my artistic statement." Here, Friedman gives up the dope on a few of *The Idealist*'s most potent pics. –MATT DIEHL



Friedman (left) with Ian MacKaye of Fugazi in 1997



«ICE-T (1992) "We took this picture on my roof when he came to my house one afternoon to play me *Body Count*, and I was surprised at how good it was. He had a gun with him, and he knows how much I fucking *hate* guns. I said, 'If you're going to carry that around, you should probably hold it to your head, because that's what's going to happen one day: You're going to end up killing yourself.' This is one of the last pictures I did with a gun in it. The watch, the big diamond ring – they just tell you that no matter how much money you have, the gun will still bring you down."





«BEASTIE BOYS (1991) "They played me the tape of *Check Your Head*, and I was so stoked on it. They already had an idea for the album cover – they said, 'Glen, we love the photo for Minor Threat's "Salad Days" single; we want something that feels like that.' I shot maybe three frames of them sitting on the curb, and I was like, 'That's *your* "Salad Days." ' This shot is from that same session – to me, it's really the Beastie Boys. It was my idea to have them hold their equipment cases, because they were coming back to the basics. It's just dope."

«TONY ALVA (1977) "That's Tony Alva, the most important skateboarder of all time. He cried when he saw that picture – he says it tells him everything about that era. Skateboarding's peak was right then: People were doing aerials, breaking the air barrier, things that had never happened before. When they would do a new maneuver, I was there to catch it. It's a backyard pool at a multimillion-dollar house where this young guy named Dino lived. He had bone cancer – he was really fucked up, healthwise – so the pool was empty. He'd just smoke weed with the guys who'd come by."

COURTESY OF MPL (MCCARTNEY)

THE INDUSTRY

TROUBLE IN CLUBLAND

RECORD CLUBS STRUGGLE AS CATALOG CD SALES DRY UP

ARE RECORD CLUBS GOING THE way of the 8-track? After nearly doubling business between 1988 and 1994 (when clubs posted $1.8 billion in sales), BMG Music Service and Columbia House, leaders in the ten-albums-for-a-penny-type promotion, are suddenly free-falling – business has dropped nearly thirty percent between 1994 and 1997.

The problem is, now that most consumers have replaced their vinyl record collections with CDs, the clubs' revenue streams have dried up. "Demand for back catalog has dropped off dramatically," concedes Columbia House's Sharon Kuroki.



Not everyone is mourning. Record-store owners, who complain about the clubs' ability to practically give away CDs, are delighted. Don VanCleave, who runs the Magic Platter in Birmingham, Alabama, and heads the Coalition of Independent Music Stores, says that another reason for the decline is that some artists "got the message from retailers" to stop selling records in the clubs. He may be right. Earlier this year, club members searching for new CDs by Pearl Jam or Madonna were out of luck. Turned off by the lower royalty rates paid by club sales, more superstars are demanding a longer lapse between the time their albums are released and when they are available to clubs. "What used to be a ninety-day window is now turning into twelve months," says one senior label source.

Kuroki admits that some superstar releases are now off-limits to clubs for up to twelve months but insists that examples of this are "limited."

In an effort to turn things around, Columbia House recently launched a new club, Play, which eliminates the "negative option" postcards that arrive in members' mailboxes every month. BMG has also started a new club, CDX, which offers free shipping and handling. As for those sweet club come-ons, Play, which boasts, "Any Twelve CDs FREE Right Now!" is not backing down. "The saving grace of clubs for us was they were a hassle" for members, says VanCleave. "Now they've taken the hassle out of it and made it a little more attractive." The feud rages on. –ERIC BOEHLERT

LINDA McCARTNEY'S LOST RECORDINGS

PAUL RELEASES HIS WIFE'S CAREER RETROSPECTIVE

AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS WIFE, LINDA, WHO DIED IN April, Paul McCartney has released an album of songs that she recorded over the years. *Wide Prairie* includes sixteen tracks, from 1972's "Seaside Woman" to "Appaloosa," which was recorded in England last March.

The album was under way at the time of Linda's death. "A couple of years ago, a fan wrote to Linda saying she had enjoyed 'Seaside Woman' and asked if there were any more tracks of hers available," Paul McCartney said in a statement. "That letter made us decide to gather all the music she had recorded and put it on one album."

"Seaside Woman," a breezy reggae lilt, served as the soundtrack to a 1980 animated short film of the same name; "Wide Prairie" and "Oriental Nightfish" also provided inspiration for animated films. Other tracks include "Cook of the House," from 1976's *Wings at the Speed of Sound*, and covers of the Coasters' "Poison Ivy" and the Chordettes' "Mr. Sandman" (co-produced by Lee "Scratch" Perry). Linda handles lead vocals, and Paul and members of Wings play on some of the tracks. Paul also provides personal comments about each song.

Wide Prairie makes no grand statements, nor any inappropriate claims, for Linda McCartney as a significant musical talent. It's the expression of a woman who was actively enjoying her life; and, in its ease and openheartedness, it encourages everyone who cared about her to do the same. –ANTHONY DECURTIS

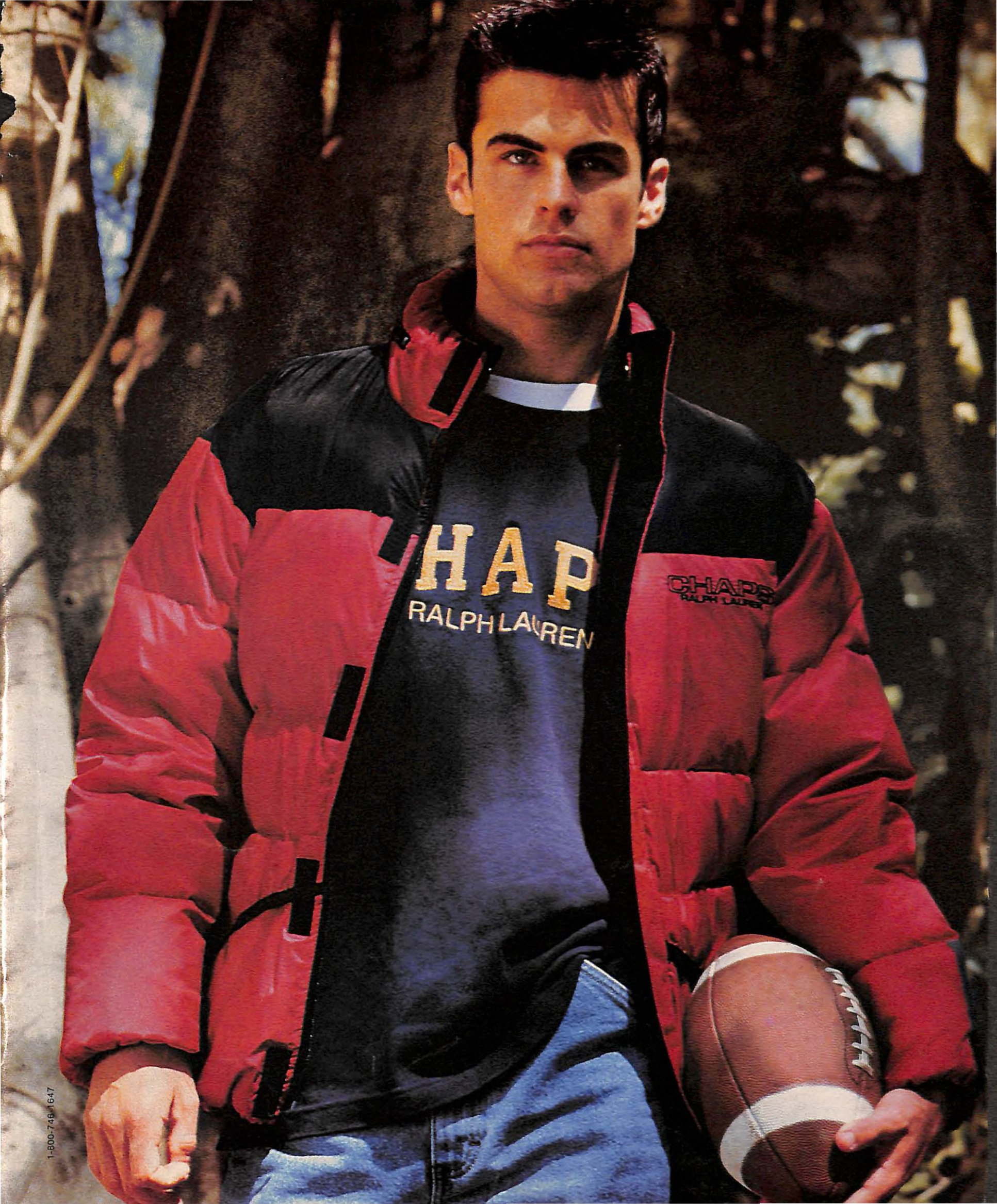


Linda and Paul McCartney at their Sussex, England, ranch



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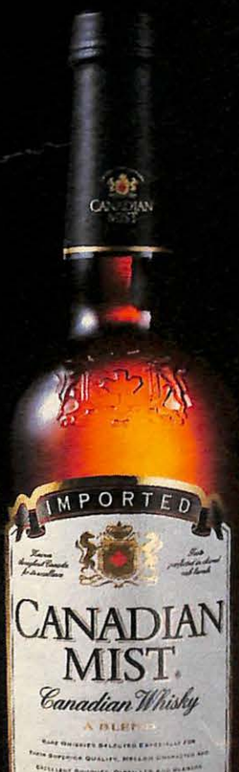
’70s Night.

Umbrella Drinks.

Karaoke.

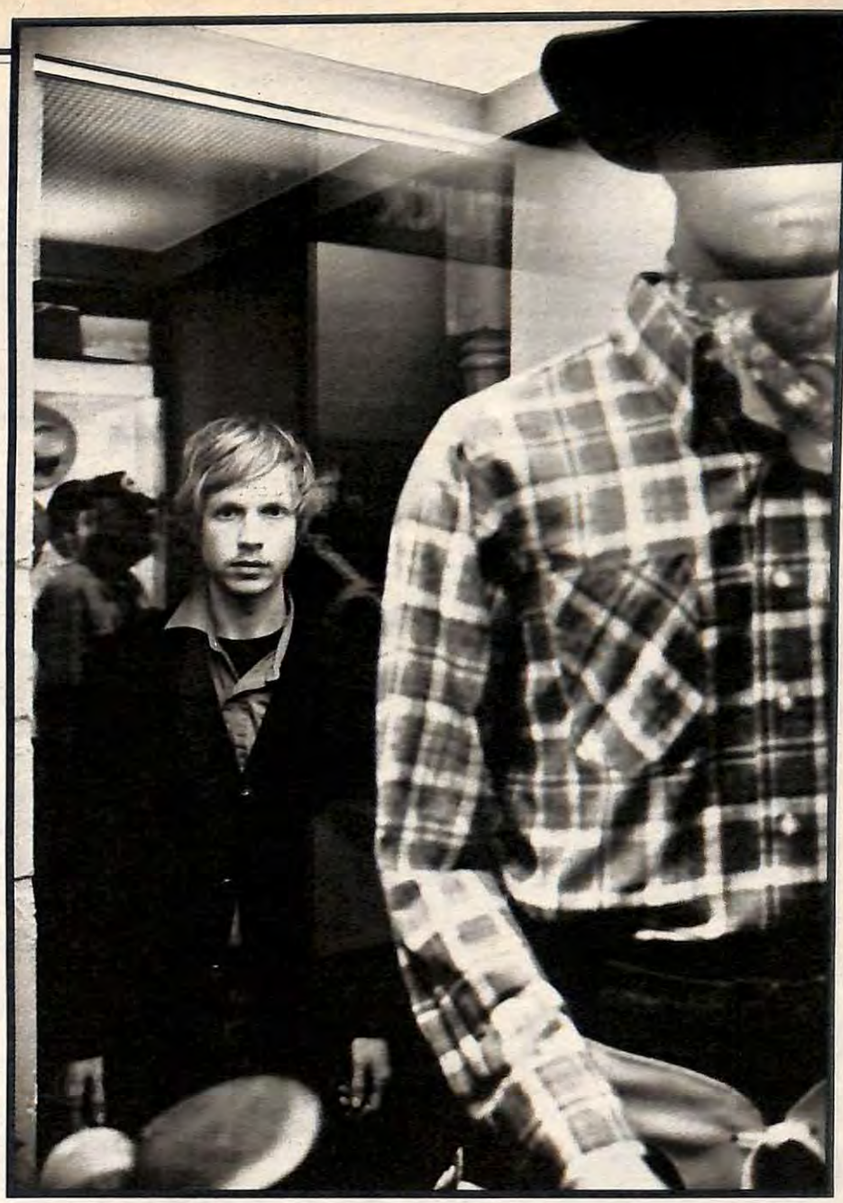


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BECK

"With *Mutations*, there was no Nineties angle. I really let the songs just exist outside of town – I mean, time."

"YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME, my brain's a little rusty right now," Beck says on the phone from Los Angeles. "We've been in the studio day and night." His new album, *Mutations*, hadn't even been released, but Beck was already hard at work on the next one. Of course, Beck is adept at staying ahead of the curve. Few artists in recent years have seemed as effortlessly of-the-moment. *Mutations*, however, sounds like it could have come out in 1966. With Nigel Godrich, who handled the board on Radiohead's *OK Computer*, as coproducer, Beck and his band hammered out fourteen songs in fourteen days last spring (twelve made it onto the album). *Mutation*'s out-of-time quality – as if Beck and Robyn Hitchcock had decided to remake Pink Floyd's *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* – lends it a strange, otherworldly feel, the very familiarity of its sounds ultimately becoming oddly, though not altogether unpleasantly, unsettling.

Mutations is a much more straightforward record than you've made before. How did it come about?

I got back from the *Odelay* tour and I probably should have just taken some time off. But aside from the "Deadweight" song [on last year's *A Life Less Ordinary* soundtrack], it had been a few years since I'd been in the studio, so I was insanely anxious to do something creative with the band – go in and just do some stuff real quick. So I scared up a bunch of songs I had sitting around.

Songs you'd written on the road?

Before that. These songs go back four years. I had a lot of songs that were a little more contemplative, quiet and folky. Some of them I tried to record for *Odelay*, and they just didn't pan out. I was also trying to think of a producer, and Nigel's name came up. He was heading back to England, but we talked him into staying a few extra days. It was very spontaneous. I didn't even know him.

What songs did you do?

"Cold Brains" and a couple of things that didn't make it onto the album. We recorded and mixed the songs in a day. It was great. Unfortunately, Nigel was supposed to go on vacation, so I was trying to figure out what to do, and then he suddenly called and said, "I'll blow it off. I have fourteen days. We'll just go in and do it." We decided we'd do a song a day, record and mix. No looking back. No doctoring anything. And it turned out to be the album as you hear it.

It sounds like you set out to make a period record, using instruments like the sitar, for example.

I just think they're great sounds. You can look at it from the viewpoint that a sitar is retro, that it conjures up psychedelic albums from the Sixties. But it's also an ancient instrument. It's a beautiful sound in any time, any place. When I was younger, one of my favorite sounds was the Delta-blues slide guitar, which also has that richness and groaning quality that is, to me, the most primal musical sound. We made an effort to use it with some sort of taste [on "Cancelled Check"]. We laid it back in the mix so it wouldn't be...

In quotes.

Exactly. It was just part of the texture.

What about the title *Mutations*?

It's a word that represents the music on the record. In some ways the approach to the album was a throwback. Like you said, not a lot of things are in quotation marks. It's not a pastiche. But at the same time, it's not pure. Certain elements are country rock or folk rock; but even though you don't hear it, these songs were written in a time when hip-hop, drum-and-bass, all manner of musical hybrids exist. Whatever imprint that's left on me, it's part of the music. So I think of *Mutations* as a positive word, not something that represents abnormality or an aberration.

A theme of exhaustion seems to run through the album.

That's true, unfortunately [*laughs*]. It probably has a lot to do with touring – although I really don't want to write songs about being on the road. But it also draws on elements of exhaustion in the culture. I'm definitely refraining from any sort of millennial statement, but whether we like it or not, there's a conscious end-of-the-line thing happening right now.

Do you feel like you're working on two tracks, with the traditional aspects of your work crashing up against the experimental?

There's two elements in my music that started out from opposite sides, but they're slowly blurring together. What eventually became *Mellow Gold* was a side project from the more folk stuff, like *One Foot in the Grave*. When Geffen was putting out *Mellow Gold*, they asked me, "Do you want to do this record as Beck or use another name?" They realized it was different from what I was doing on my own. So *Mutations* could be construed as, I guess, like, a solo record or something – going solo from myself [*laughs*]. But I try to embrace the ambiguities, these two opposite sides living within one musical sphere.

What's the album you're working on now like?

It's completely different. [*Hesitates*] You know, I could be eating my words in a year.

Well, we'll be sure to come back and throw them in your face.

Yeah, exactly. Well, so far, it's completely different from *Mutations*. The whole point of *Mutations* was to capture a performance. I wanted it to feel like a group of people sitting in a room, the vocals live, that synergy of people playing together. That my music has characteristically been cut up and sewn together wasn't entirely willful. I was working within the means I had, working with computers and technology. When we were doing "Fuckin' With My Head" or "Loser," that terrain was a lot less explored. The drums, the break beats, the folk element – it was really novel, and we were excited. Now everybody and their mother is there [*laughs*]. Trespassers! Hijackers! People moving in! It was a beautiful playground, but it's a little crowded now. So with *Mutations*, there was no Nineties angle. I really let the songs just exist outside of town – I mean, time [*laughs*]. And outside of town. Not in the suburbs, but...

An attractive, semirural area?

Yeah, but with a local convenience strip mall and an interstate. Anyway, I wanted to do something more traditional, because I knew the next record wasn't going to be like that. It was just going to be me locked away with the computer trying to make music I hadn't heard before.

When do you hope to be done?

Next summerish. I'm letting it take its course. I want to let the different elements in what I'm doing duke it out. Or come to a truce. It's more of a party record, I'd say.

What kind of party?

That remains to be seen. Or, much more importantly [*laughs*], whether it's the kind of party anybody would want to come to. –ANTHONY DECURTIS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE GROSS

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Michael Stipe, as wanly beautiful as ever

NEAR THE END OF his set at the annual Bridge School Benefit, a grizzled Neil Young paused. "I'd like to sing something for the kids now," he declared from beneath the battered hat pulled over his eyes. "I'll be right back." Settling down at a wheezing pump organ, he turned to face the children whose wheelchairs lined the rear of the stage and delivered an achingly beautiful rendition of "After the Gold Rush." A sold-out crowd of 20,000 responded with the night's lengthiest ovation.

It was one emotional moment among many during the first night of the mostly acoustic festival, founded twelve years ago by Young and his wife, Pegi, to benefit the Hillsborough, California-based Bridge School for speech- and physically-impaired children. In past years, featured artists have included everyone from Bob Dylan to Sonic Youth, with Young himself rounding out the lineup like a crusty and well-loved patriarch. He opened this concert with "Sugar Mountain" and then returned to jam with Phish before playing a set that included "Old Man," "Heart of Gold" and "Throw Your Hatred Down" (and "Gold Rush"). For his final number, "Ambulance Blues," he invited "some friends of mine," R.E.M.'s Peter Buck and Mike Mills, to play along.



Neil Young jams with Phish.

This year's festival boasted a diverse roster and an equally diverse crowd. Phish's a cappella rendition of "Free Bird" inspired some to dance wildly and others to groan. Sarah McLachlan sent rock-leaning patrons rushing to the concession stands. The ebullient Barenaked Ladies, on the other hand, managed to whip everyone into a party mood.

In light of drummer Bill Berry's departure and the band's decision not to tour for its new album, *Up*, R.E.M.'s forty-minute set was the most eagerly anticipated of the night. It proved both confounding and mesmerizing, running up and down the dynamic scale as the band's three founders segued from *Up*'s complex, post-psychedelic arrangements to older rock standards such as "Losing My Religion" and "Man on the Moon." Guest musicians Joey Waronker (drums), Ken Stringfellow (guitar) and Scott McCaughey (guitar and keyboards) provided instrumental backup. Live, new songs such as the Brian Wilson *hommage* "At My Most Beautiful," the Seventies-soulful "Suspicion" and the debut single, "Daysleeper," emerged as haunting, elliptical hymns. Wanly beautiful in green eyeliner with a matching stripe running down his forehead, Michael Stipe sang his lyrics with a cool Zen detachment. But Stipe lost his otherworldly calm when Young joined in for a climactic jam on "Country Feedback." Plopping down on the stage like a reverent fanboy, Stipe watched, rapt, while indie rock's elder statesman soloed on his old guitar. **–NEVA CHONIN**

ELVIS COSTELLO AND BURT BACHARACH

CONSTITUTION HALL

October 15th, 1998

Washington, D.C.

WARM GOODWILL WAS in the air when Burt Bacharach bounded onstage, his white thatch virtually glowing, as a twenty-four-piece orchestra swung into "What the World Needs Now Is Love" – his trademark fondue of easy-listening cheese and masterful rhythmic eccentricity. With the songwriter at the piano, joined by the orchestra (complete with an all-girl string section), four backup singers and ex-Attraction Steve Nieve at the keyboards, Bacharach and Elvis Costello performed tunes from *Painted From Memory*, their lush, dark-toned collaborative album.



Lush life: Costello, with Bacharach on piano

Costello's bitter romanticism and limited voice sounded peculiarly suited to a balladeer's self-consciousness, especially his tendency to sing in the throat and dry out his high notes. After four tunes from *Memory*, notably a mournful and defiant "Tears at the Birthday Party" and the Bacharach-Hal David classic "I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself," Elvis left the stage. What followed was an inconsistent medley of Bacharach's hits – and some notable misses. Introduced as "songs from film," the greats ("The Look of Love," "Walk on By," "Twenty-four Hours From Tulsa," "Always Something There to Remind Me") were cheated by thirty-second renditions, and the dogs ("Making Love," "*Arthur's* Theme [Best That You Can Do]") should have been put down. Costello then gave a majestic treatment to a few of his own songs – "Accidents Will Happen," a fast, fierce "Veronica" and "Alison," all hush and grandeur. But it was the collaborative tunes that swung hardest and cut deepest – the cabaret drone of "This House Is Empty Now," the hopeless refrain of "My Thief" and the searing "What's Her Name Today?" The evening clothes may have been a little snug for Costello, but the emotions that Bacharach's music inspired were a perfect fit. **–ARION BERGER**



The look of love: Bacharach and Costello near the end of the night

ON THE ROAD

TORI AMOS No one would confuse a Tori Amos performance with your standard testosterone-heavy mosh-pit rock blowout, but leave it to the cornflake girl to make the unlikely comparison. "I like to think that the power is still there, but it's not about putting your elbow into somebody's nostril," she tells us. "It's much more about having your own sensual experience." The traveling show finally comes to a halt after eight months of nearly constant touring, and this last leg will be saved for posterity on a live album (don't hold your breath – it's not due until Christmas '99) and in the dreams of each and every one of Amos' adoring fans.



Pittsburgh, Nov. 6; Indiana, PA, Nov. 7; Ithaca, NY, Nov. 8; Rochester, NY, Nov. 12; Poughkeepsie, NY, Nov. 13; Lowell, MA, Nov. 17; Durham, NH, Nov. 19; State College, PA, Nov. 21; Ann Arbor, MI, Nov. 22; Bethlehem, PA, Nov. 23; Newark, DE, Nov. 24; Newark, NJ, Nov. 25; Akron, OH, Nov. 28; Columbus, OH, Nov. 29; Indianapolis, Nov. 30; Grand Rapids, MI, Dec. 2.

TRICKY The trick here is translating the complex ambient-blues tapestry of Tricky's latest, *Angels With Dirty Faces*, to the stage – especially considering his notoriously no-key live presence. A five-piece band and a female vocalist (Tricky's partner, Martina Topley-Bird, is sitting out to care for the couple's young daughter) help stretch Tricky's songs (one of which incorporates Blondie's "Heart of Glass") into loose-limbed, long-form jams. "I'm not musically trained," the trip-hop icon says. "I can't sing and I can't dance. Spontaneity is the only thing I've got, so it's very important."

Jacksonville, FL, Nov. 6; Myrtle Beach, SC, Nov. 7; Knoxville, TN, Nov. 9; Charlottesville, VA, Nov. 10; Pittsburgh, Nov. 11; New Haven, CT, Nov. 13; Northampton, MA, Nov. 14; New York, Nov. 15; Providence, RI, Nov. 17; Baltimore, Nov. 18; Cincinnati, Nov. 21; Detroit, Nov. 22; Indianapolis, Nov. 24; Columbus, OH, Nov. 25; Chicago, Nov. 26.

THE AFGHAN WHIGS While in New Orleans recording their new album, *1965*, the Afghan Whigs were plagued by temptation. "I'm gonna go back and live in New Orleans when I can behave myself," swears Whigs leader Greg Dulli. For now, the college-radio favorites have left the Big Easy to tour with what Dulli says will be a fairly sexually charged show. "There's no live sex or anything," he says. "But it's a sensual show – a little less guilty and a little more naughty than in the past. I'm single now."

Boston, Nov. 6; Montreal, Nov. 7; Toronto, Nov. 9; Detroit, Nov. 10; Chicago, Nov. 12-13; Milwaukee, Nov. 14; Minneapolis, Nov. 16; St. Louis, Nov. 18; Columbus, OH, Nov. 19; Cleveland, Nov. 20; Philadelphia, Nov. 21; Washington, DC, Nov. 22. **–NOAH TARNOW**

JAY BLAKESBERG (BRIDGE SCHOOL); BRIAN G. LIU (COSTELLO AND BACHARACH); DARREN KEITH (AMOS)



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THE GLOBAL ECONOMY IN CRISIS

Six steps the United States must take now to prevent a depression at home

BY WILLIAM GREIDER

FLAGS OF ALL NATIONS LINE THE BALLROOM WALL, but the sea of blue suits makes the world seem a very somber place. Several thousand bankers, economic-policy makers and global financiers have gathered in Washington, D.C., in early October, for their annual ritual of self-congratulation and deal making, the joint meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. At this event, even the reporters dress like bankers. Hundreds of them have come from every continent, and none dares to smile or banter in such a crowd. Around the world, people are losing serious money – companies, nations, even the bankers themselves.

The financial titans, political elite and technocrats do not feel so powerful at this moment. The Brazilians are running in and out of meetings, trying to persuade creditors from New York or London or Zurich that Brazil is not next on the list of defunct economies. Stock markets are routinely losing two or three or five percent a day. The French are steamed, as usual, at American inaction, but so are Koreans, Japanese, Germans and the representatives of other lesser nations. The global system is unraveling in slow motion; paper wealth is evaporating on a trillion-dollar scale. Yet no one seems to have a plan.

The veil has fallen from the IMF's awesome visage, too. For decades, the fund has dispensed loans to troubled economies, along with stern conditions on how their unsound practices must be reformed. During the past year, the IMF's golden touch has turned into a gruesome sort of curse. Whatever country receives IMF loans and implements its austerity plans sees its economy sink deeper into ruin.

A scratchy recording of "Hail to the Chief" announces the arrival of the American president, accompanied by Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, and the world is on its feet, anxiously waiting for a strong message that might restore hope. "The world faces perhaps its most serious financial crisis in half a century," Bill Clinton begins. But he looks tired; his voice is flat. Two days later, the House of Representatives will vote to begin its impeachment inquiry. Clinton's speech turns into a collage of heartfelt clichés, with no meaningful plan of action.

When the leader does not lead, others seek their own remedies. Russia suspends payments on its mountainous foreign debts. Malaysia opts out of the free market by imposing emergency controls on capital flows, and other developing nations are tempted to follow. Japan puts together its own $30 billion rescue fund to aid its battered Asian neighbors. Mexico's finance minister laments to the *New York Times*: "What worries me is, who is running this show? There is an enormous vacuum

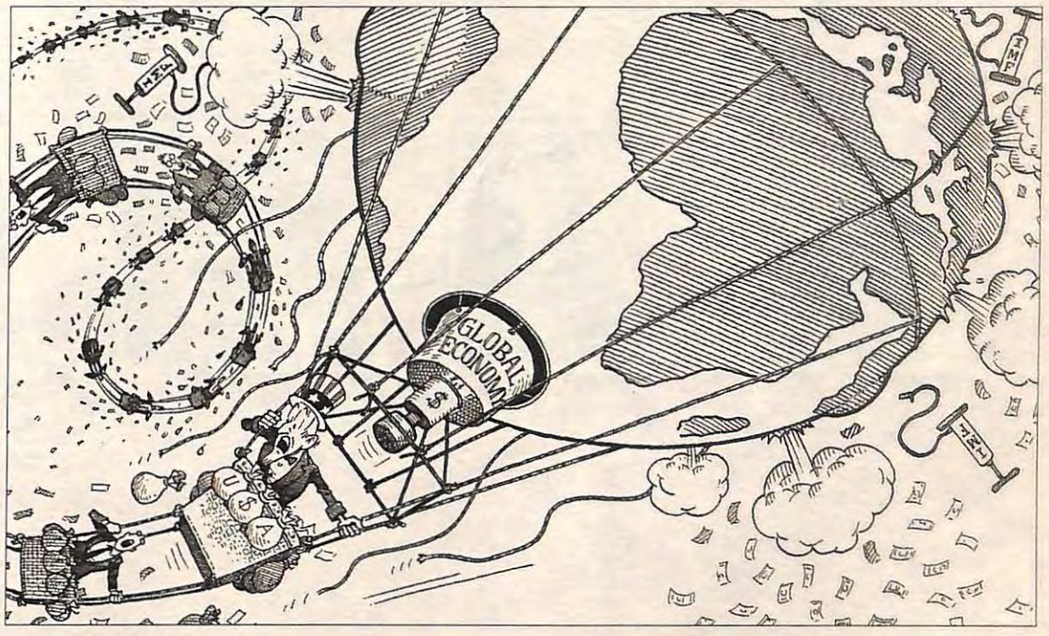


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of leadership worldwide."

A few days after Clinton's speech, the dollar plunges against the yen and deutsche mark. The prices for U.S. manufactured goods are falling at the fastest rate in nearly fifty years, a deflationary pressure sure to squeeze corporate profits further. The U.S. Export-Import Bank seizes a Boeing 747-400 owned by Philippine Airlines.

Amid such bizarre events, the IMF's managing director, Michel Camdessus, reassures everyone that normalcy is right around the corner. If nations will adhere to the conservative orthodoxy of sound economics, this crisis will in time be seen "as just a temporary setback."

Sometime in the future, historians will use remarks like this to illustrate the hubris of the governing authorities and the folly of our era. The global economy – and our reigning free-market economic theory – has entered a fateful crisis. It threatens a tragic breakdown of the global system that could lead to vast human suffering as peoples' everyday livelihoods are sacrificed to the abstractions of learned theorists.

The longer that leaders pretend otherwise and refuse to act decisively, the more likely that this suffering will engulf the world. The "D word" is already present in speculative conversations among elites and even in some forecasts – that is, the possibility of global depression.

"Fatal Systems Error"

Some ordinary Americans are already intensely focused on their own losses, haplessly watching the stock market devalue their family savings – marking down the few thousand they invested in a mutual fund or perhaps their stake in a retirement account. They should not feel so stupid. The very smartest people are also losing their money, on a gargantuan scale.

Harvard University dropped $1.3 billion in the marketplace, about ten percent of its endowment, when it bet on esoteric financial gambles. George Soros' Quantum Fund lost $2 billion when Russia went blooey (though his Quantum Group still holds around $20 billion). The now-notorious Greenwich, Connecticut, hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management became a basket case in early September, most of its $4.8 billion in capital wiped out when panicky financial markets abruptly contradicted the firm's arcane, analytical assumptions about how prices behave.

The implosion of Long-Term Capital has caused real collateral damage, deepening the general anxieties of investors and hitting those major Wall Street and European banks that lent tens of billions to finance the firm's market gambles. But Long-Term Capital is more important as a symbol for our age – how very smart people with learned credentials, including two Nobel-winning economists, managed to fool themselves, and their bankers, with their computers. Merrill Lynch, J.P. Morgan, Goldman Sachs, Chase Manhattan, Morgan Stanley – nearly all the best and biggest names of American finance – were so eager to dive in that they did not require Wall Street bond wizard John Meriwether and his firm to reveal the full range of their indebtedness: the borrowed leverage that rose as high as $90 billion. This is stunning: If you need a car loan or a home mortgage, the lender wants every last detail about your credit rating and who else has lent you money. But if you are an inside guy who needs $10 billion or $15 billion for a market play, it's no questions asked.

As more reckless gambles are uncovered and stock prices continue to sag, a worldwide financial bubble is bursting. The long-running bull market is over. Global markets had been buoyed for years by giddy investors possessing a surplus of wealth (thanks to rising income inequalities). Financial illusions are shattering, with severe consequences.

Contractionary forces are now spreading across the globe. The collapse of Asian economies resulted in a huge decline in consumer demand. This in turn has exposed the crucial problem in nearly every developed country: over-capacity in most manufacturing sectors, from cars to computers. If the United States is not able to absorb the excess supply, countries will drive down the value of their currencies in order to sell their goods more cheaply than their neighbors. That contest can become a deadly deflationary spiral, once it begins.

The gravest threat, however, may be fear. When people are buffeted by financial losses, they respond by hunkering down into a defensive crouch. Bankers stop investing and lending, producers stop building, consumers stop buying and borrowing. Fear feeds on itself, becoming a depressant on the economy.

Meanwhile, the media have been behind the curve from the outset. First the crisis was condescendingly called the "Asian flu." Then, as the crisis leapt to other continents, it became a "financial contagion," like a strange new disease no one could explain. A more accurate metaphor to describe the wondrously complicated and utterly unregulated global system is a grand but deranged computer – it can perform many marvelous functions, instantly and precisely, but has no sense of balance, no internal governor to curb the predictable impulses toward greed and random destruction. The utopian idea that markets need no restraints by governments is what's spinning out of control. The computer screen is frozen, displaying that chilling message FATAL SYSTEMS ERROR.

IF YOU NEED A LOAN, THE LENDER WANTS EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR BACKGROUND. BUT IF YOU'RE AN INSIDE PLAYER NEEDING $10 BILLION, IT'S NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

A Holiday From Bankers

It is not too late to avert a historic tragedy, but this will require brave heretics in powerful positions – political leaders willing to break decisively from the conservative orthodoxy and ignore its laissez-faire prescriptions for the marketplace. Major governments – especially ours – have the power to reverse this deflation before it turns into a full-blown global depression. But first they must find the courage to act aggressively.

Partly for the shock effect, I suggest a global "bank holiday" like the one Franklin Roosevelt declared for American banking at the darkest hour of the Great Depression, in early 1933. Close down financial markets, banks and brokerages for one day, worldwide. Overnight, governments would announce a dramatic agenda of new recovery measures – initiatives designed to stimulate economic activity and to muscle the bankers and other major players into cooperating with this reversal of direction. Bold action by leaders can itself generate hope and optimism to counter the spreading fear and pessimism.

The symbolism of a "bank holiday" is important. Governments have to free themselves from the bankers' mentality – their obsession with financial indicators as the measure of economic well-being. Instead of trying to restore financial order – stable currencies, liquidation of bad bank loans, zero inflation – governments must accept this central lesson from the 1930s: Banking and finance will not be restored to good health until the real economies of producers and consumers are rescued first. Once economic growth is restored, there will be time later to clean up the financial reforms. If the real economies are not revived, bankers are sure to fail, too.

Our dilemma is that governing authorities want to see the visible evidence of calamity before they are willing to take extreme measures. This natural hesitation may explain the weak and tentative steps taken so far by our wounded president and his two main economic advisers, Treasury Secretary Rubin and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, both of whom are financial conservatives. Official hesitation and timidity are what led to the complete collapse of major economies between 1929 and 1933. The experts refused to face new realities that contradicted their conservative maxims. They watched passively as the great unraveling destroyed the global trading system.

What follows is my quick list of emergency steps that governments ought to be taking – right now.

(1) Cut interest rates much more substantially than the Fed has yet been willing to do – Europe should, as well – increasing the money supply to counteract the deflationary price pressures that are hammering profits, production and employment. The U.S. itself is sinking toward recession right now – thanks to the Fed's indifference to global deflation. A U.S. recession will gravely aggravate the downward spiral for other nations, because they hope to recover by selling more exports to a vibrant American market.

(2) Mobilize both political parties to enact a significant, one-time tax cut aimed not at benefiting the usual upper-income brackets, but that instead delivers more money to the paychecks of ordinary working people who will promptly spend it.

(3) Create jobs quickly by accelerating and enlarging public-works projects for improved infrastructure (roads, bridges, schools), which the nation needs in any case. In other words, the political fixation on balancing the federal budget must be reversed, at least for several years, to gain the stimulative impact of deficit spending.

(4) Fire the leaders of the IMF and replace them with a group of pro-growth business executives who understand how the international agency's lending power can be employed to jump-start failed economies, instead of depressing them further with austerity measures. With new leadership and a new di-

National editor WILLIAM GREIDER *profiled House Speaker Newt Gingrich in RS 799.*

rection, the IMF could also organize a rescue agency like the Reconstruction Finance Corp., which operated during the New Deal, lending capital to companies that cannot get credit from the private financial system, pushing lenders and debtors into work-outs and temporary moratoriums that allow economic growth first, debt repayments later.

(5) Restore some capital controls to protect poorer nations from the current hysteria of global capital – the in-and-out surges of "hot money" that overwhelm struggling economies and leave them in ruin. This means that nations could stabilize their inflows and outflows of investment money, at least until their economies regain their health. Ultimately, the major industrial nations should also re-regulate financial systems, not to shut down global investing but to moderate its manic behavior. Until this occurs, the crises and breakdowns will continue to spread random destruction among millions of innocent bystanders.

(6) Finally, to foster global recovery, the United States cannot escape the role of "buyer of last resort," absorbing swelling exports from others, including rival Japan, in order to foster a global recovery. That process will balloon our trade deficits and wipe out many prime manufacturing jobs. After the crisis, however, the U.S. must force a showdown with the unbalanced trading system that penalizes American workers to the benefit of our trading partners. For now, we don't have much choice.

These are ugly prospects for a country soon to be engaged by another presidential-election season. But our long-term economic interests – not to mention our humane values toward the rest of the world – require an enlightened internationalism, not protectionism and not the nasty, selfish values promoted by the free-market crowd. The political temptation to withdraw from the global system will get stronger as this crisis deepens, but history teaches that retreat only makes things much worse for everyone. In the last crisis of capitalism, protectionism led to global collapse, the rise of fascism and then the carnage of World War II.

It will take brave and honest leaders to persuade scared and injured Americans to accept these costs in the larger interest of the long-term future. Indeed, working people in America are entitled to know that the future promises them a better deal – more equity and opportunity – than they've been given by the status quo. In fact, I don't think the present global system will survive on its present terms, not unless it's reformed in fundamental, progressive ways.

A Cure That Makes Things Worse

SURVIVAL IS ON THE MIND OF MARCILIO Moreira, the former finance minister of Brazil and now a Rio de Janeiro-based adviser to Merrill Lynch, who goes from one meeting to another at the IMF conference, trying to convince American bankers and financial analysts that Brazil is not Russia. It seems obvious to him, but not to nervous bankers who just got burned on the other side of the globe by the Russian default.

"We have to reassure them so they don't lose their wits," Moreira explains with a trace of weariness.

Moreira has spent a career of forty-five years working on his nation's episodic financial emergencies. "I've seen Brazil in crises much worse than this one," he says, "but I've never seen such a complex and comprehensive crisis for the global economy."

Brazil is next on the hit list, everyone seems to agree. The IMF is preparing a loan package requiring severe austerity measures. Moreira shrugs with an ironic sense of pride that, for once, Brazil looks like a defining issue for the world's future. "Foreigners look at Brazil and say, 'What can go wrong?' Brazilians look at the same situation and ask, 'What can go right?' " he says. "I try to show outsiders this real Brazil that is broad and diverse and growing at five percent a year."

Indeed, this vastly promising nation does not fit the conventional explanations for imperiled economies. After three decades of financial turmoil, staggering debts and political upheavals, Brazil finally got everything right – that is, it did everything that foreign capital and the U.S. government demanded in terms of financial order. Brazil adopted the so-called Washington consensus for deregulation and open trade, and thus achieved respectable standing in the global trading system. It removed various barriers to imports, reduced inflation and stabilized its currency, began selling off state-owned industries, and repealed price controls and various subsidies.

By 1992, foreign money began pouring in – first short-term credit, then portfolio investments in stocks and other financial assets, and then an ever-growing stream of direct investment for companies and various capital projects. The Brazilian economy gained momentum and expanded robustly, averaging four percent annual growth from 1993 to 1997. When the Asian crisis spread its shock waves last November, investor fears pulled down Brazil's stock market, too. The government responded by hiking up interest rates, as high as fifty percent, to defend the currency and keep the foreign money from flooding out – exactly what Washington's bureaucrats would prescribe for such a situation.

> WE MUST MOBILIZE BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES TO ENACT A TAX CUT THAT DELIVERS SPENDING MONEY TO ORDINARY WORKING PEOPLE.

For a time it seemed to work. The real economy of production and consumption slowed down dramatically under the punishing level of interest rates, but the stock market recovered, and enormous amounts of foreign capital began flowing in again. The government's reserves of foreign currencies built up to $75 billion, and economic growth resumed.

"Then came Russia," Moreira explains. "Russia really changed sentiment. I think the market had forgotten about the idea of debt moratorium [when a nation suspends payments on its foreign debts]. Russia reminded investors this risk was still there. But there was also a financial cataclysm, because these emerging-market funds were holding the Russian paper. Those fund managers needed liquidity, and so they started taking money out of other countries. They began selling Brazil to cover their losses in Russia."

As Americans and other foreign investors rushed to bring their capital home, Brazil's condition deteriorated rapidly. Its stock market has fallen forty percent this year, and about $35 billion in capital has fled, reducing Brazil's currency reserves to around $45 billion. As capital continues to flee, Brazil may reach a critical moment when it could have to devalue its currency or impose emergency controls on the capital outflows. The latter would be a less costly remedy but would spook foreign investors for a long time to come. The government chooses to stick with the Washington consensus and hope for the best.

"Something has to be done to stop the hemorrhaging," Moreira says. In fact, it's not a major loan that Brazil needs but simply an available line of credit from the IMF that will persuade financial markets to calm down.

The credit-extension agreement will almost certainly require austerity for the Brazilian economy – a severe reduction in the government's massive deficit spending (equivalent to eight percent of the economy). The first effect will be a drop in demand and a slowing of the Brazilian economy, making things worse for the already-shrinking global economy. When Brazilians are compelled to buy less, producers around the world lose one more market. This policy pattern has helped sink many struggling economies during the past year. There's no evidence, as yet, that the Washington orthodoxy is ready to change its mind.

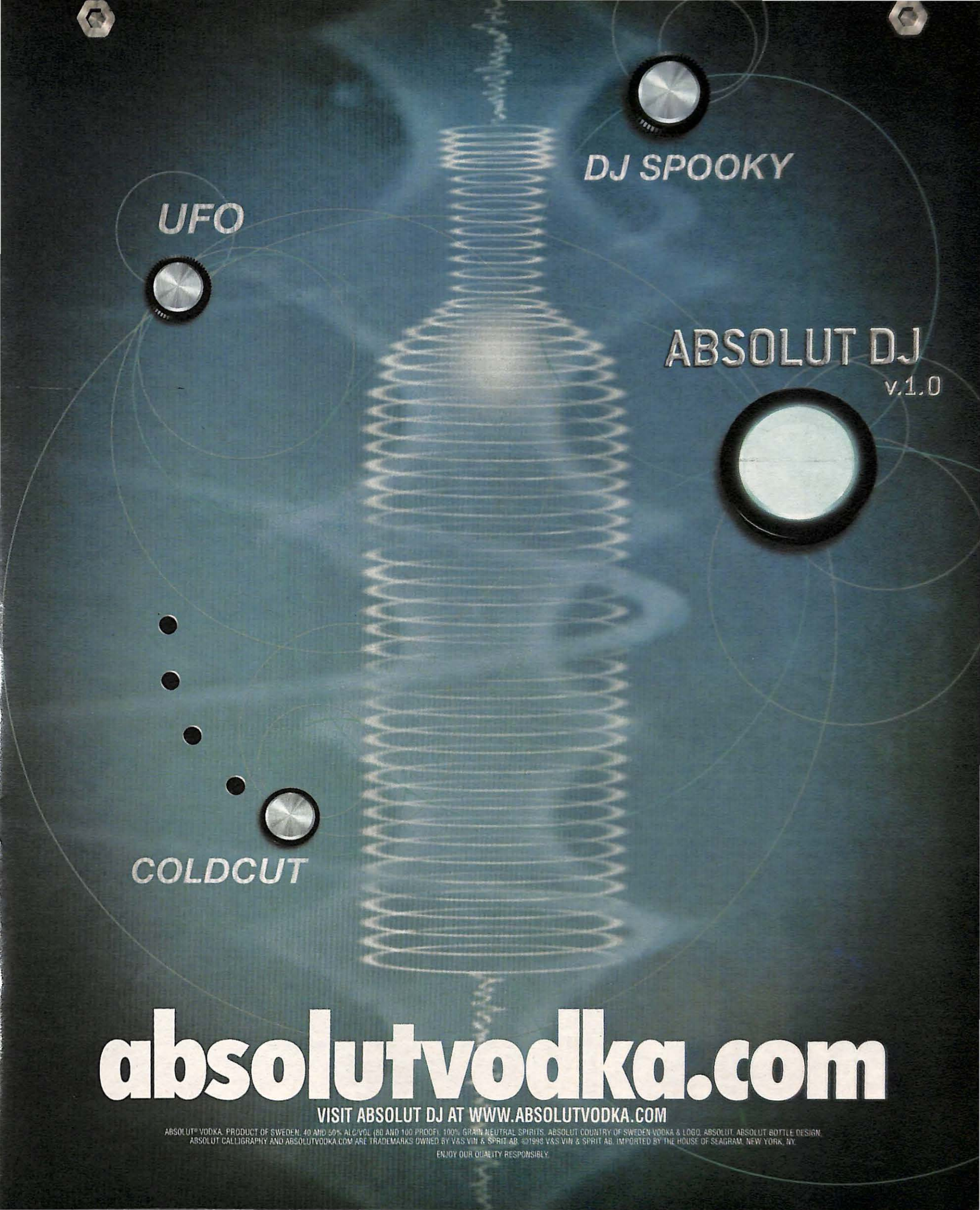
If Brazil goes down, who's next? We are.

A New, New World Order?

ONCE THE WORLD GETS OUT OF THIS DITCH (if it does get out), an exciting new vista opens before us – the chance to reform and moderate the global system, so that its wealth-creating powers do genuinely serve everyone, rich and poor alike, across the distances of geography, the differences of race, religion and history. That kind of reform is much more difficult than launching a recovery agenda, because it means nations (especially the U.S.) must confront economic and social contradictions that a generation of giddy globalization brushed aside.

When people are compelled by economic crisis to look more closely at the global reality, I predict they will be shocked to discover that some of the system's basic tenets are absurdly reactionary, even immoral. In the present terms of trade, for instance, nations can invoke tariff penalties to defend the rights of capital (such as copyright rip-offs), yet the trade agreements treat human rights as irrelevant to free commerce. That is, basic human freedoms, including the rights of workers to organize themselves and contract jointly for their labor, are regarded as illegitimate intrusions. So is protecting the natural world from rank, industrial despoliation.

Globalizing commerce and finance have connected us to distant others – as consumers and producers, as workers and managers and investors – but we have not yet learned how to live with these connections. It remains for the rest of us to define our mutual values – the social obligations and economic assumptions that should unite us – and then to mobilize the political struggles that will make them real. The politics are bound to be long and hard, but it will be noble work for citizens on both ends of the global system. This crisis opens the door to great change, but we can't leave reform to the bankers. ◆



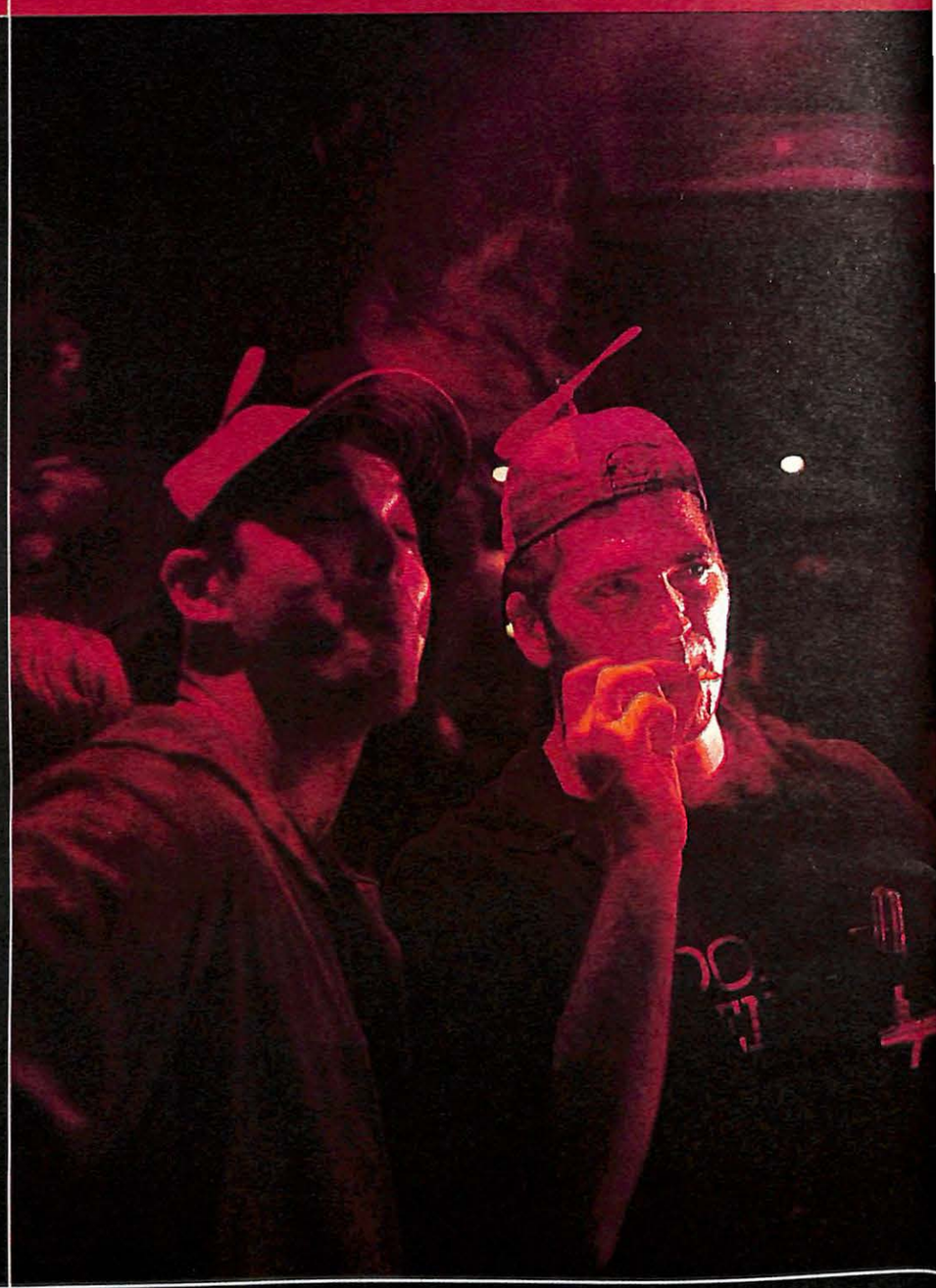
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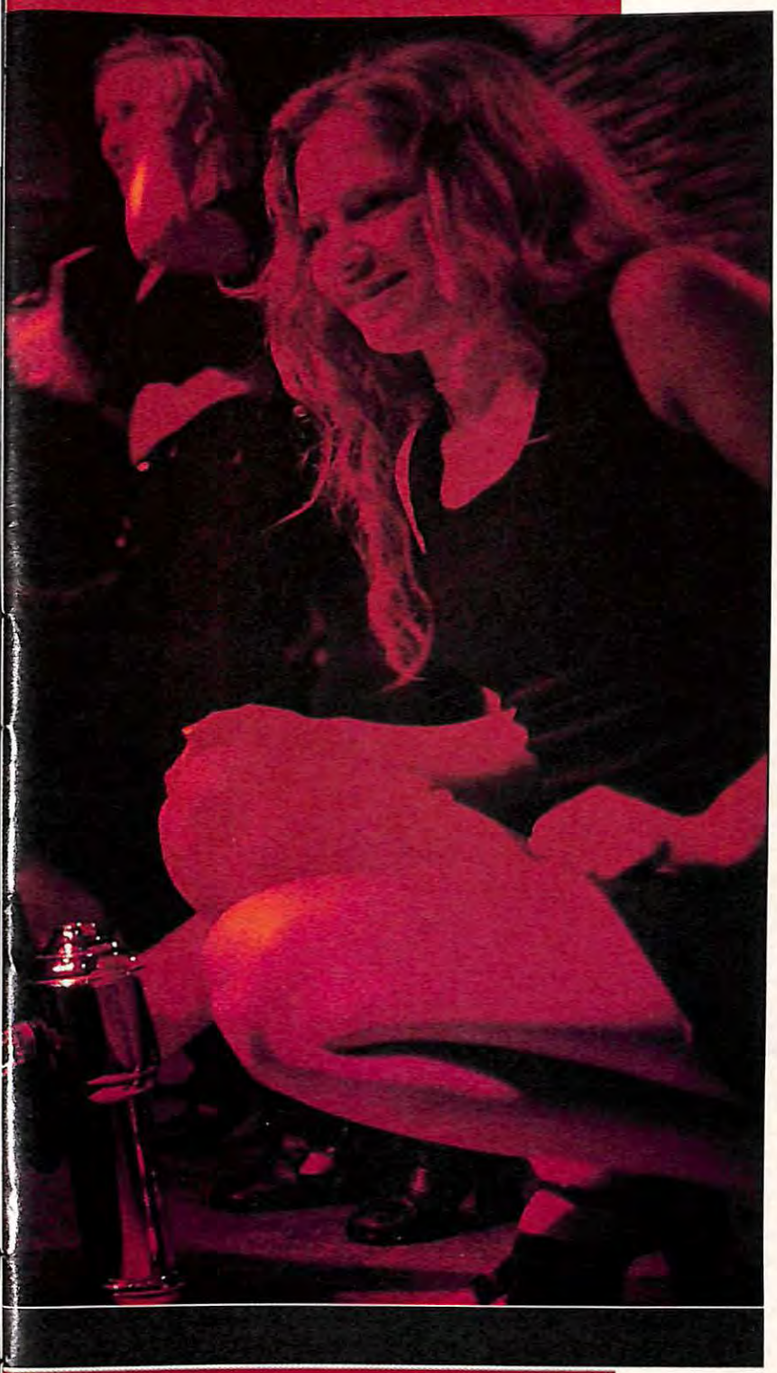


Matt Taibbi (left) and Mark Ames in a Moscow nightclub

Post-Soviet Moscow parties so hard, it sometimes parties to death.

Two young Americans – Mark Ames and Matt Taibbi – are chronicling the sick frenzy in their controversial newspaper, "The eXile"

By Brian Preston



ON A MOSCOW STREET CALLED STARAYA BASMANAYA, THERE'S AN ARMENIAN restaurant. Above it, on the second floor, there's a cluttered office where every other Sunday you will find Mark Ames and Matt Taibbi brainstorming. Floating on the mass of litter that covers their desks are Pringles tubes, bottled water, Marlboro Lights and amphetamines – essentials of the overdrive diet that will see the two Americans through to deadline, sixty hours away. By then they need to churn out a twenty-four-page issue of *The eXile*, Moscow's biweekly alternative English-language tabloid aimed at the 100,000 or so expat Westerners living in Moscow. Ames and Taibbi have been crashing deadlines since February 1997, holding a mirror up to the metropolis that Ames calls "manic, nihilistic, grotesque, horrible; and yet, in its own way, far superior to any other city on Earth."

Not that Moscow looks superior. Gloomy rows of Stalin-era apartment blocks are now absurdly crowned with billboards for Coke and Christ. The broad boulevards, built to accommodate columns of Red Army tanks, are now choked with Bangkok-like gridlock. On the sidewalks, young soldiers beg for change, kiosks peddle hypodermic needles, and grandmothers lurk in the shadows beneath bridges, selling drugs. This city of 10 million has, by some estimates, leeched off eighty-four percent of the former Soviet Union's wealth, leaving the country in such a sorry predicament that stories of cannibalism don't even make the front pages anymore and the life expectancy of the average Russian male has dropped from sixty-eight years in 1985 to fifty-seven today. This August's near total meltdown of the Russian economy delivered the crushing blow to what had already statistically crunched out to be the worst depression any industrialized nation has suffered this century. Since 1989, Russia's gross domestic product has fallen by fifty percent.

In the weeks following the surprise devaluation of the ruble, trading was halted on the Russian stock exchange three times, the currency lost half of its value, and the government could not pay off foreign creditors. Prices on consumer goods shot up thirty-six percent, and the world was treated to images of Muscovites pounding on the locked doors of their banks, hoping to empty their accounts while the money still meant something. For Ames and Taibbi, who months earlier had predicted and even supported a Russian default on foreign loans, it was a depressing vindication of their prognoses; but it also marked the beginning of the end of an era that *The eXile* had captured as no other paper had.

But through it all, the newly rich Muscovites and *arriviste* Westerners have been feeding at the nation's carcass to create a desperate, nonstop party. Seventy years of communism have succeeded in obliterating any notion of saving for the future: Money is worth only what it will buy right now, and a whole industry of bars, clubs, casinos and whorehouses has sprung up to relieve the new rich of their American $100 bills. Ames and Taibbi take the raw material of this decadent new Moscow and convert it into 25,000 instantly snapped-up free issues of *The eXile*, consisting of misogynist rants, dumb pranks, insulting club listings and photos of blood-soaked corpses, all redeemed by political reporting that's read seriously not only in Moscow but also in Washington.

In their year and a half as co-writers and -editors, Ames and Taibbi have developed a routine: "research" anything to do with nightclubs, intoxicants or messy death for ten days, then panic for two days, then write for two. This is what they sound like in the panic phase, sweating out ideas against time and blank pages: "How 'bout we drive around in a car with a corpse, put piano wire around its neck and see how many bribes we have to pay the police to keep driving," Taibbi suggests.

Ames giggles, "Fuck the corpse, just the head."

"By the way, we got another death threat today."

"Tell them to take a number."

LAST APRIL, WHICH TO MOST AMERICANS LIVING IN MOSCOW SEEMS A LIFEtime ago, I stood with Ames and Taibbi on a slushy street, hailing a cab. They're a menacing pair – both are well over six feet tall, broad shouldered, with all-day five o'clock shadows. Taibbi, 28, has a round face, small teeth and a laugh loud enough to turn heads in restaurants. Ames, 33, is psychologically and physically the darker of the two – the Sephardic part of his heritage makes him stand out among the pale Slavs, and in Moscow anyone darker than a Slav gets targeted for a shakedown by cops. "The last time, I didn't have

Photograph by Gueorgui Pinkhassov

change, and, of course, the cunts wouldn't break a hundred," Ames complains.

Finally a battered Lada swerves out of the passing stream of Mercedes, Toyotas and Volgas, and Ames and Taibbi slip across midafternoon Moscow on bald tires, headed to the Ostankino television studios. They've been invited to guest on a Russian talk show called *Pro Eto,* which means "about it." The *it* refers to sex. Ames and Taibbi, who speak Russian well enough to talk on television, will be prodded to reveal how making it with Russian women compares with love American style. The invitation to appear on the show was prompted by an article Ames wrote called "Army of Darkness: Moscow's Ugly Americans," published in *Ptyutch,* a hip Russian magazine. A sex life that might seem normal to a Russian, says Ames, "is for us forbidden and unheard-of, and laced with a lot of guilt. I was trying to let Russians into the mind of the average American nerd in the bar scene in Moscow, what happens to nerds when they come here and they're suddenly given the opportunity to live like Slash or something, like a second-tier heavy-metal guitarist playing at the Whisky-a-Go-Go and then being able to choose from teenage girls afterward." Ames grew up in the "bland and stultifying" suburbs of San Jose, California, tried his hand at grad school and then enrolled in a creative-writing program at Boston University. A Czech girlfriend brought him to Prague in 1992, but don't get him started. "Prague?" He compresses his dark, heavy brows and drops his voice into a snarl that's pretty much second nature. "Prague is a bunch of American English teachers sitting around in cafes, using the word *Kafkaesque* a lot. There's nothing Kafkaesque about it – nothing strange ever happens there. Moscow isn't Kafkaesque, either. Moscow is Dahmer-esque."

Because it caters – and panders – to a narrow expat subgroup (American male twentysomething bankers and brokers), *The eXile* enrages many other readers – not least of all the tight circle of American media correspondents. Still, Andrew Meier, *Time*'s Moscow correspondent, says that "no one describes expat life in Moscow better than *The eXile.* They hit it right on its ugly head." Another American reporter told me, "They're Beavis and Butt-heads, not journalists." But love it or hate it, *The eXile* has become a must-read for Moscow's Western press corps because in every issue, Taibbi – under the pen name Abram Kalashnikov – serves up a savage critique of the ways American journalists misreport the stories they file for audiences back home.

BRIAN PRESTON *wrote about pot bars in Vancouver in RS 783.*

Most issues of *The eXile* also present a feature-length portion of Taibbi's reporting, some of the toughest, angriest, out-on-a-limb investigative journalism to come out of the new Russia. Where Ames' obsessions are darkly sexual, Taibbi's are political. In college, Taibbi volunteered on one of Jesse Jackson's presidential campaigns. His father is longtime NBC reporter Mike Taibbi. "I grew up with a dad who raked muck and loved it when rich guys got fucked," he says.

Taibbi's pieces portray the way the wealth of the former Soviet Union has been snatched up by the same elites who ran the country under communism. He is one of the few Westerners whose stories are regularly picked up in the Russian media. His two biggest scoops include an exposé of corruption in a World Bank-sponsored investor-protection fund overseen by Western advisers and an explosive allegation of bribery involving an American banker. "The Russians picked up that story all over the place," Taibbi says. "But the Western papers were all talking about how it's just shady reporting and doesn't prove anything."



"The eXile": Sex, gore and muckraking

On our way to the TV studio, Taibbi talks about why he came to Russia. "When I started reading Gogol, I decided I wanted to be a comic writer," he says. "I wanted to be the great pain in the ass of American history. *The eXile* is the perfect starting point." He arrived in Russia as a student in 1990, started stringing for Western newspapers, learned Russian and eventually ended up at the *Moscow Times,* the city's English-language daily. Four years later, he quit to play pro basketball in Mongolia for seventy-five dollars a month, where the broadcast of pirated NBA-playoff videos had created a basketball frenzy. "The Mongolian Basketball Association is the only other league in the world playing NBA rules," Taibbi says. "Even that goofy thing where you can call a timeout as you're flying out of bounds." Eventually he developed complications from pneumonia, dropped thirty pounds, nearly died, returned to the States for a lifesaving operation, recovered and ended up back in Moscow, hired to edit a weekly called *Living Here.*

Mark Ames was *Living Here*'s previous editor. He had split acrimoniously with the publisher and had just launched *The eXile.* When Taibbi's first *Living Here* and Ames' third *eXile* came out on the same day, the two covers were nearly identical: blondes in leather. Ames phoned up Taibbi to suggest that they stop competing and work together.

At *The eXile,* they set out to break every taboo going. Each issue carries a column by Ames' idol, novelist Edward Limonov, often called the Henry Miller of Russia, whose seminal 1970s novel, *It's Me, Eddie,* is a benchmark in skank lit. "It's the bravest, sickest, most honest thing I've read – raw and totally amoral," Ames says. Here's an example: Limonov, who is fifty-five, explains how to stay healthy in middle age – "Throw away your old wife, never even look at overweight, wrinkled woman. Find yourself a pretty teenage girl and fuck her as often as you can."

Most issues carry a feature called Death Porn, a look at Russia's nastiest blood crimes, replete with snide captions tacked to photos of hacked-up corpses. Ames has defended Death Porn as a legitimate reflection of some innate Russian inability to be shocked by gore. "Murders so gruesome and shockingly stupid that they would plunge a Western nation into months of self-examination are, in Russia, as common as . . . well, the common cold," he says. "Three family-hour TV shows are dedicated to Russian faces of death: You can watch naked rape-murder victims splayed in the blood-stained snow, severed heads and charred corpses while Junior studies his Pushkin."

Post-Soviet Russia has seen an explosion of a so-called yellow press, and many newspapers play recklessly with their facts. *The eXile* takes that freedom to another level, playing pranks on Russia's new rich, on Western PR firms and on other journalists. Their greatest coup in the art of getting powerful people to agree to really stupid ideas was the time Taibbi and Ames convinced Mikhail Gorbachev to enter into negotiations to become assistant coach in charge of perestroika with the New York Jets. But *The eXile*'s bread and butter, the reason it turns a profit for its publisher, is the nightlife listings. Cruel, caustic and funny – not to mention sophomoric and obvious – the listings rate each club according to the three F's: the Foam Factor, the price of a beer; the Fahkie Factor, estimating your chances of getting laid; and the Flathead Factor ("Will you walk out alive?"), measuring the presence of Russian mafiosi.

One night, Ames took me to a club called Titanik, located in a bunker under the stands of a soccer stadium. Titanik has the most powerful roof in Moscow – *roof* being the term for the protection offered by an interlocking partnership of organized crime and public officials. *The eXile* gives Titanik the highest Flathead Factor – three stars – meaning, "If you so much as flinch, you're a dead man." At four o'clock, as Ames watched some models sponsored by a new Russian magazine called *Cash and Fashion* strut the stage above a dance floor jammed with what *The eXile*'s listing describes as "babe-o-litas and their flathead keepers," he shouted to be heard above the generic house music: "I saw the ultimate flathead duet here one time – two guys dancing with handguns at each other's throats." It's the kind of Moscow moment that makes Ames feel like he's living in *GoodFellas,* a movie he's seen fifteen times.

The club's PR man, Stan, came up to take offense at *The eXile*'s rating of the place and also to complain about a recent sample of Ames' regular *eXile* column Moscow Babylon, which could be described as a lonely, angry rake's progress through an urban hell of whorish indulgence and sexual, emotional and physical violence. In the column that upset Stan, Ames recounted threatening to strangle a girlfriend if she didn't have an abortion. "I know that girl," Stan chided. "You should have at least changed her name. You're too cruel for Moscow." Ames shrugged it off but later said, "He's right. I should have changed her name."

A few minutes later, he was talking to a cute American girl who worked in marketing. He invited her back to his place to snort heroin. Another night, we were in a bar called the Hungry Duck, a big, oval-shaped, rough-planked drinking den, and Ames picked out a willowy Latvian blonde who'd joined the legions of other drunken, pretty things in clambering up to dance on the bar. She had the kind of "porcelain-pale, heroin-thin Russian vixen" beauty that Ames obsesses over in his column. Before long he had his head tilted back so she could lower the crotch of her leather pants onto his face. He asked her to go home with him. She declined, blaming an inconvenient moment in her monthly cycle. Ames' response: "That's all right, I'll fuck you in the ass." He's compelled, both in life and in his writing, to say these things for effect, to shock. As a consequence, he's not terribly successful as a lady's man.

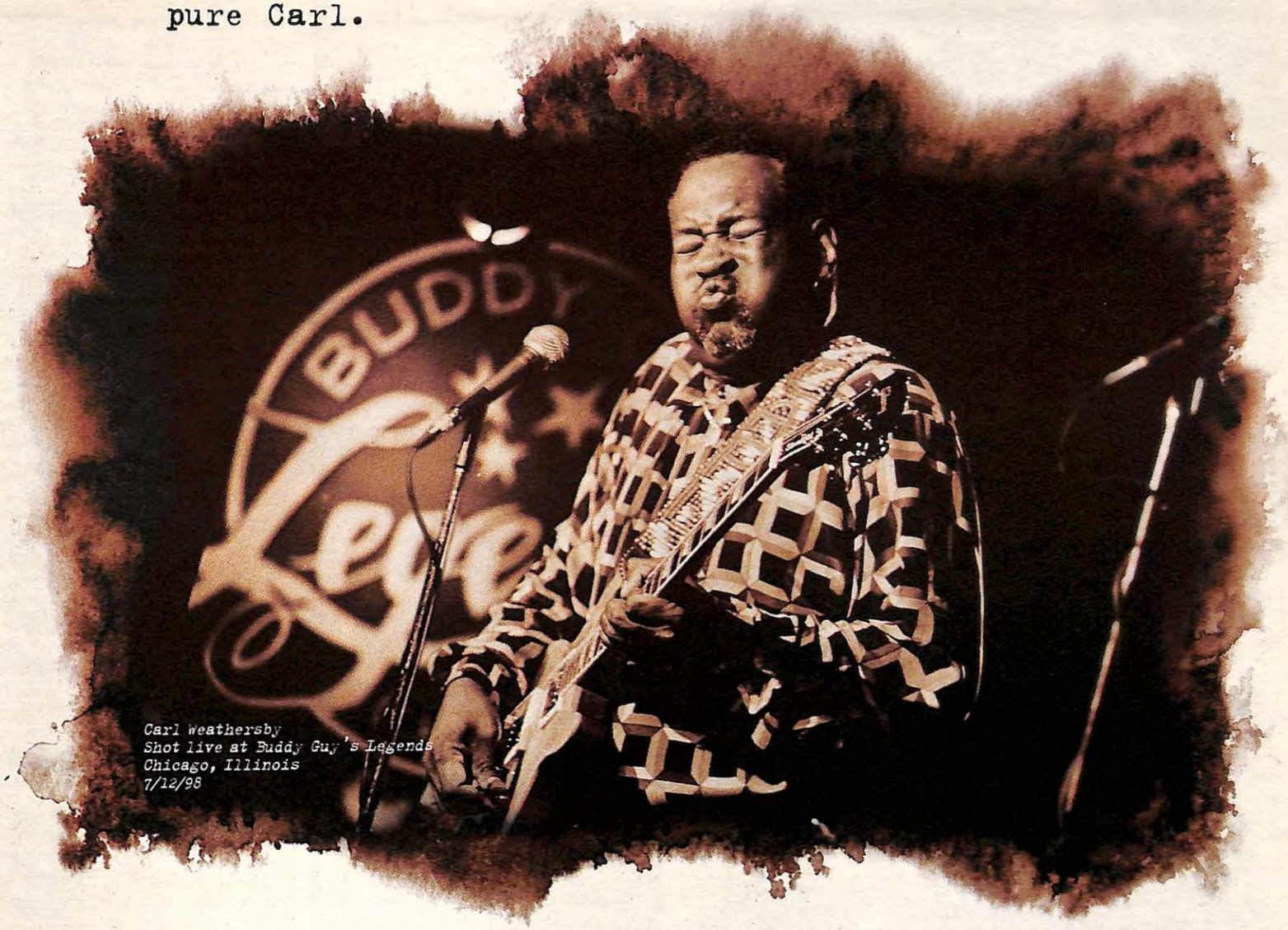
AS THE CAB TO THE TELEVISION STUDIO passes a circular steel-and-glass structure, Taibbi points out the window and says, "See that building? It was privatized for sixteen dollars. Some deputy of Gorbachev's got it."

Ames says, "There used to be a disco in it. I know a girl whose man was shot

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB GRANT

pure **blues.**

pure Carl.



Carl Weathersby
Shot live at Buddy Guy's Legends
Chicago, Illinois
7/12/98

When Carl Weathersby plays he's reaching deep into his heart and letting his emotions pour out through the music.

When it reaches your ears, it will touch your soul.

And even if you're not right there when Carl plays, we think you should still hear him as if you were.

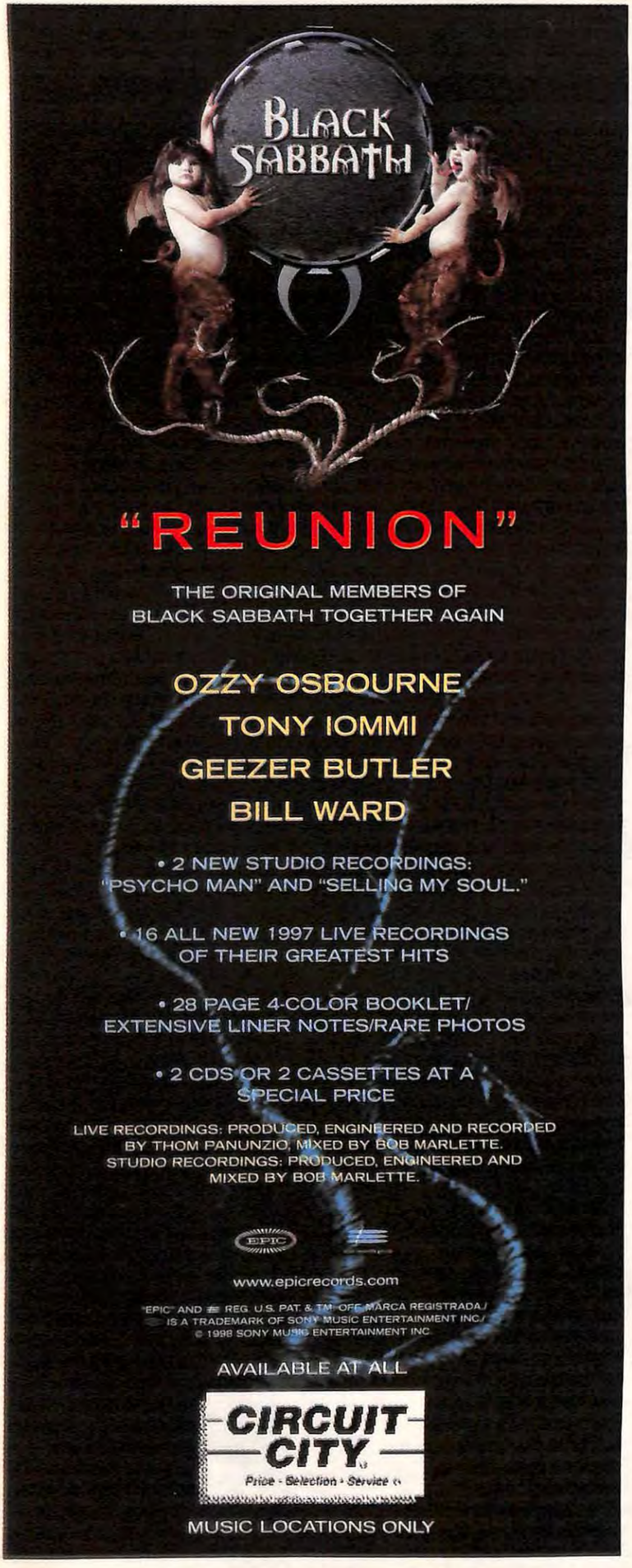




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to death in there." Every young Muscovite has a similar story of direct contact with strange mayhem, he says, offering as an example one from an ex-girlfriend he calls Julia the Jail Girl. "They found her first husband's body without a head," Ames says. "She thinks he's still alive, that he absconded with a bunch of money, found some homeless person, cut off his head, put his clothes on him and dumped him in the river. To this day she suspects he split, and she's very hurt about it too. She feels he should have at least called her to tell her he was cutting somebody's head off and he wouldn't be seeing her anymore."

"We're gonna be late," Taibbi says.

"Fuck 'em. We're stars."

In the makeup chair at *Pro Eto*, the boys hear that they'll be sharing the stage with Jean MacKenzie, who writes a column called Confessions of a Russophile for the *Moscow Times*. Her column is a mainstream American single woman's take on Moscow and is frequently and ruthlessly parodied in *The eXile*.

"I feel so bad for Jean," says Taibbi.

"Never feel sorry," Ames shoots back.

"But the point of this show is that American guys come over here and Russian girls are just hotter than American women and have fewer complexes, and there's Jean, taking the other side – she's a middle-aged woman with anger lines."

She doesn't show for the taping. In the absence of a feminist foil, Ames does his best, at first, to be provocative. "It's like being in a porn film, having sex with a Russian girl," he says. Taibbi, on the other hand, suggests that Russian girls are "more passive in bed. Not more passive, more servile. No, that's not the right word, either" – he gets frustrated that his Russian is not up to the subtleties of describing intimate matters. Ames, much more practiced with the sound bite, concludes that "sex in America is like an ideological competition. It's unnatural, and it's not very interesting."

For the sake of balance, *Pro Eto* brought Jean MacKenzie into the studio the next day for the expat woman's point of view. "I understand that Mark and Matt swept the hall with their diatribe against American women," she tells me over the phone. "If they think we're disgruntled because idiots like them are trying to get laid by eighteen-year-olds, they're wrong." Saying she doesn't read *The eXile* because she doesn't want to be subjected to Ames' stories, she then refers to one about "spontaneous miscarriages and smeared fetuses on the walls."

The next day, I relay this comment to Ames. He starts digging through *The eXile*'s files, which amount to a ragged computer box stuffed with random copies. Finding the back issue with the offending paragraph, he reads it aloud, as if expecting to be misquoted. Nope. MacKenzie is pretty close, except that she left out the "accompanying geysers of vomit" part. But he defends it on the grounds that the toilet miscarriage in a bar he's describing actually happened. "Writers like Jean ignore or censor anything that upsets their safe view of the world: that it's following a positive moral evolutionary graph," he says. "I tend to see things as moving backward morally. I've been hanging out with non-elite Russian youth on and off since I got here, and I still don't think I'm getting to the heart of the savagery."

"Mark Ames should move to New York and live under a bridge," Jean MacKenzie says. Accusing Taibbi of reporting "rumor and half-fact as fact," she concedes that he has "all kinds of potential, but he has to stop burning bridges."

Taibbi responds, "Without Mark, I'm inclined to be more cautious. With him, I have no choice but to burn bridges. His columns offend so many people that my association with him automatically makes me a pariah. I'd be upset about that except that the people who condemn Mark are closed minded and wrong."

"Jean says Matt is burning bridges," Ames says later. "She couldn't say, 'I admire the risks he's taking.' "

"When I left to go play pro basketball in Mongolia," says Taibbi, "the editor of the *Moscow Times* sat me down and told me, 'You're ruining your career.' I said, 'By what possible standards can you say that going to play pro basketball in Mongolia is a worse move than staying here rewriting wire copy? What kind of a mind do you have to have to say that?' "

"I think our generation is the worst of all, as far as groveling up the career ladder," Ames muses.

"I don't know what the hell happened," says Taibbi. "In the Seventies it was *All the President's Men* – can you bring down the president? In the Nineties it's *Up Close and Personal* – can you get the vapid anchor job?"

"In a way it's kind of good that these beige types control so much," Ames suggests. "It leaves a lot of territory open for me and Matt."

AMES AND TAIBBI COUNT AMONG the "beigists" most of the corporate American press corps in Moscow. Before the big crash of August 17th, most Moscow correspondents were still clinging to the notion that to report on Russia, you needed an *us* and a *them*, good guys (pro-American free-market reformers) vs. bad guys (Communists in the Duma and anti-democratic nationalists). Taibbi and Ames have been using their paper to argue that the real story in Russia is the free-for-all clash within a small elite of corrupt oligarchs, who were usually called reformers because they mouthed platitudes about embracing the West.

Taibbi's disgust with the pro-reformer slant of the Western media reached its peak in March of this year, when he phoned Op-Ed writer Fred Hiatt of the *Washington Post* and asked him if he'd been paid off to write what Taibbi calls a "blow job" piece extolling thirty-seven-

year-old "baby billionaire" Vladimir Potanin. Hiatt had called Potanin "one of the world's most influential businessmen, with interests in banking, oil, mining, newspapers and more."

Potanin, who ten years ago was a low-level Communist bureaucrat, now runs – among other things – the massive mining company Norilsk Nickel, which controls thirty-five percent of the world's copper reserves. Taibbi claims that Potanin acquired the company through a rigged auction and paid for it with state funds meant for workers and pensioners. "Basically, it was a direct handover of a billion-dollar company to one person for nothing," he says. "And this is what was done all across the board when all these Russian industries were privatized. We're talking billions of dollars that were just stolen from the Russian people. This is nihilism on a level no writer can even dream of."

Fred Hiatt says his piece wasn't intended to make value judgments about Potanin "as a person, or whether he came by his money honestly." Rather, he says, it was an analysis of the future of Russian foreign policy, with Potanin used as an example of a Russian who wants good ties and greater integration with the West. "I was seeking to show that not all Russian robber barons are the same," he says.

While Western correspondents reserve judgment on new Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, Ames calls him a "total *Sovok*," a term conjuring up the worst of Soviet-era bureaucratic mustiness. "He has absolutely no program, no chance at all of saving this fucked country," he says. "He's an interim figure. The truth is that the entire country was ready to fall into Communist Party hands if they'd wanted to give it a little push, a tiny flick of the finger. However, cowards that they were, they settled for Primakov. Now they're already distancing themselves from him to avoid blame as the country slips into the abyss."

The eXile takes the point of view that anyone worried that Russia is ready to slide back into communism should be calmed by this simple fact: The Communists don't want it. This summer, under the headline BULLSHIT! THE MYTH OF THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED OPPOSITION, Taibbi described the Duma's Communist majority as "a bunch of half-bright fat flunkies who couldn't cut it as major players in the Soviet Union, only rising to captain the Communist ghost ship when the real crew bailed to become filthy-rich bankers and power-wielding Democrats after 1991. These are guys whose goals in life during Soviet times were a couple of foreign-tailored suits, access to lingerie boutiques and a new grey Volga, and now that that's what they're getting, they're happy as clams."

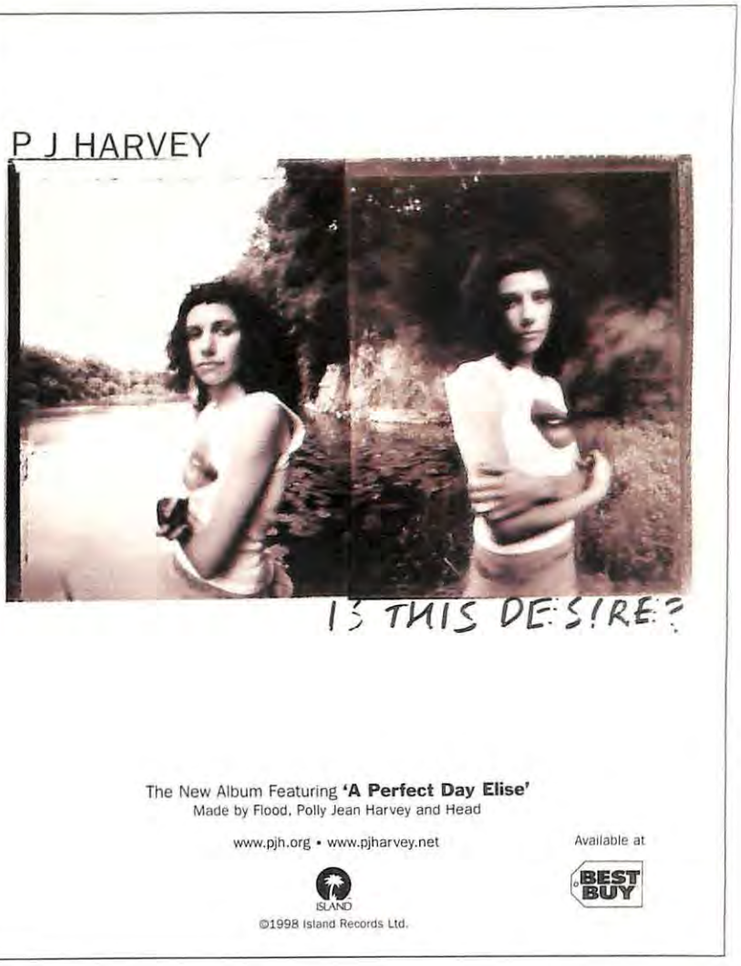
While many right-thinking Westerners dismiss *The eXile*'s reporting, it has, ironically, found supporters among the isolationist wing of the Republican Party. The paper's political writings are regularly distributed to Republican congressional aides by J. Michael Waller of the American Foreign Policy Council, a Washington, D.C., conservative think tank. "I found *The eXile* to be helpful, with its unorthodox spin," says Waller. "Taibbi has had some interesting perspectives on World Bank loans and the frauds and ripoffs that we're funding over there."

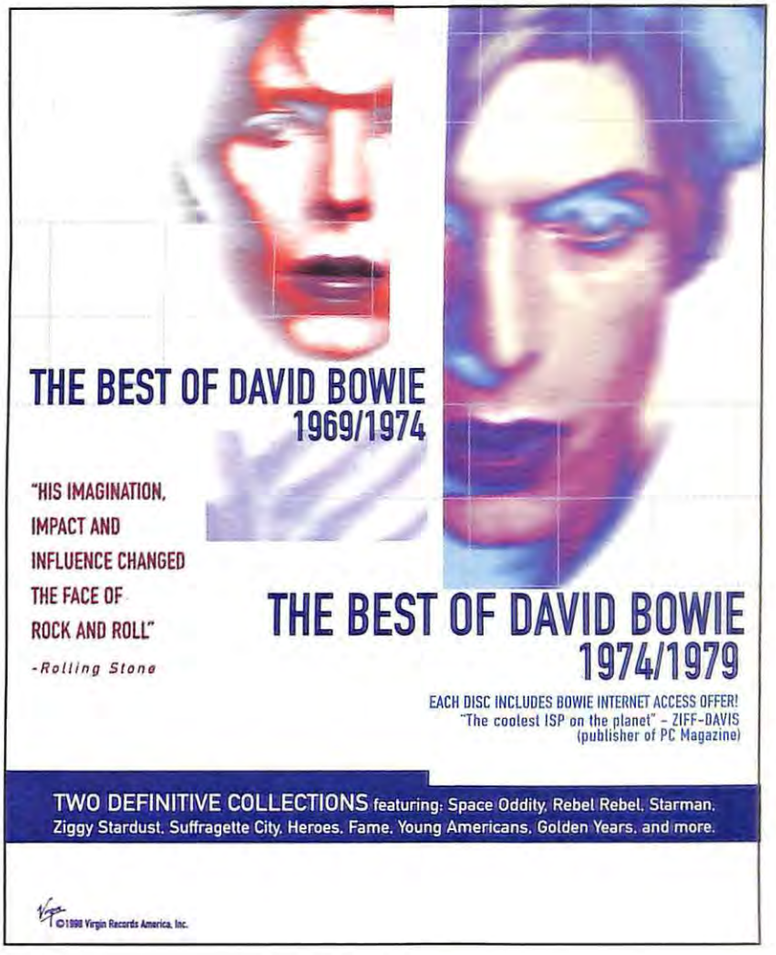
Waller sent *The eXile* a congratulatory e-mail that Ames and Taibbi published in March. That was before Walker had ever seen a complete copy of *The eXile*. "I hadn't seen the more disgusting stuff or I wouldn't have praised it that much," he now says. "The investigative stuff is very useful, but if you were to look at the whole paper, it's garbage."

REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALIKE may soon be offended by *The eXile* on a regular basis. This fall, Taibbi returned stateside to explore starting an *eXile* in Washington, where there's a void for a truly nasty nonpartisan magazine willing to go for the jugular. Ames stayed behind in Moscow, getting *The eXile* to press despite raids from the Russian tax police and serious cash-flow complications after the paper's bank shut down and never reopened, all part of the larger collapse of that big pyramid scheme called the Russian banking system. At the end of October, *The eXile* threw a "Party's Over 1992-1998" party in the unfinished shell of what was going to be an "elitny" club for ultravulgar new-rich Russians.

The Party's Over party was to be a wake for departing expats, who are leaving in droves – Ames predicts that eighty percent of them will be gone by Christmas, back to what Ames calls "the land of sunshine and sushi." The clubs that these expats favored are hemorrhaging, but the scene as a whole shows signs that it will survive. Ames predicts a shift back to apartment parties: "fewer imported drugs, more vodka, roughly equal amounts of unbridled, unprotected sex." (Speaking of sex, some of the prostitutes who advertise in the back of *The eXile* have offered to pay both editors by barter.)

In the gloom of the crisis, *The eXile* ran dark advice columns for expats on how to survive a winter outdoors. Only the ultra-nationalist Limonov seemed happy. In his *eXile* column, he warned expats of a coming anti-foreigner backlash, suggesting that they prepare to be rounded up and shipped by cattle car to Siberia. It reminded me of something Ames said months ago: "Russians call democracy 'dermocracy.' *Dermo* means shit. I think the Russians have been too passive lately. If you look at Russian history, they're passive for a long period of time, then they go far more violent and extreme than anyone could have imagined. I wouldn't be surprised if that happened again. It wouldn't surprise me if I'm nailed to a flagpole somewhere." ◆





ALANIS MORISSETTE | *The Rolling Stone Interview* | BY MIM UDOVITCH | photographs by Herb Ritts





Although it is figuratively the eve of the release of *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie* – the much-anticipated follow-up to 1995's multiplatinum, Grammy-and-other-award-winning *Jagged Little Pill* – it is literally daytime. Alanis Morissette, 24, is sitting, yoga-style, on a futon on the floor of the light-filled, minimally furnished beach house she rents outside Los Angeles, where she also owns a home. Behind her a picture window frames sand, surf, sky and a very well-placed rock. Her hair is pulled back, and she is wearing a light-purple tank top and jeans. She has the remnants of some gold nail polish on her toes, and one bra strap, white, is showing. Her demeanor is serene in a way that makes you understand why someone (specifically, *Chasing Amy* director Kevin Smith) would cast her as God in a movie (specifically, the upcoming *Dogma,* which stars Matt Damon and Ben Affleck as angels who have been cast out of heaven). She has the kind of poised, attentive posture usually seen only on dancers and shy woodland animals in animated Disney features. On a more practical note, downstairs there is a pingpong table.



Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie is very clearly the creative companion piece to *Jagged Little Pill* – even its title references its predecessor's first and best-known single, the obsession-inflected, last-word-having "You Oughta Know" (which, by mentioning oral sex, blinded the media to all other meaning, thereby setting a trend). Although it addresses many of the same themes as *Jagged Little Pill* – the pressures and insecurities that underlie perfectionism; the fallout from relationships that don't work out; the quest for self-understanding – the somewhat lusher, vaguely Eastern-influenced *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie* does so from a more consciously spiritual, more consciously positive perspective. One of the things that sets Morissette apart from the other twentysomething singer-songwriters with whom she is often and inaccurately lumped is that she writes from the point of view of someone searching for meaning in a meaningful, rather than a meaningless, world. She's not angry in the punk-rock, fuck-you tradition; she's in touch with her anger.

Morissette was born in Ottawa and grew up there after the age of six. (Before that the family moved several times, including to Germany when Morissette was three.) She has two brothers, one older, one her twin. Her parents – Alan, a high school principal, and Georgia, a teacher – are, respectively, French-Canadian and Hungarian, and there are loving songs about both of them on *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie.* In "The Couch" she imagines her father's feelings in, and about, therapy; in "Heart of the House" she honors her mother as the unsung (until now) silent center of the family. "I think the greatest gift you can give your parents as a grown-up," she says, "is to see them as grown-ups instead of the gods they seemed like when you were little."

Something of a musical child prodigy, Morissette began writing songs when she was nine. At ten she became a cast member on Nickelodeon's *You Can't Do That on Television,* a sort of preteen ensemble sketch show with postmodern leanings and a recurrent bit in which someone got doused with buckets of slime. As "Alanis," she played the love interest of the two lead boys, thus becoming the recipient of lots of hate mail from her contemporaries. (Maybe because of this, when she became a Canadian pop star at sixteen, Morissette felt she had to deflect attention from her achievements in music to avoid antagonizing her high school classmates.)

With her TV earnings, she formed her own record label and released her first single, "Fate Stay With Me." ("It's about someone leaving me and me trying to handle being alone," she says. "A fiction – or so I thought.") A deal with MCA/Canada followed, which produced two dance-pop albums: 1991's *Alanis,* which won a Juno (Canada's Grammy equivalent) for Most Promising Female Artist, and 1992's *Now Is the Time,* which belied that promise by selling a disappointing 50,000 copies. Seeking a new musical direction, she moved first to Toronto and then to Los Angeles, where she hooked up with her co-producer and co-writer Glen Ballard, a veteran of the L.A. studio scene whose previous credits ranged from Michael Jackson to Wilson Phillips. The result was the hook-y, sensual sound of *Jagged Little Pill,* the explosive, expressive jailbreak of a record that powered past critical suspicions to the kind of popular success (28 million records sold worldwide) that can't be predicted or even totally explained.

Morissette and Ballard took the same gunslinging approach to making *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie* as they had to the last album, laying down seventeen tracks in six weeks. "It was written much the same way that *Jagged Little Pill* was written, in that everything was done very quickly," she says. "Working alone or with Glen, I'd write it all at the same time, whether it was on bass or guitar or piano – music and lyrics all at once. And then we'd do most of the tracks right away just to capture the spirit. And then, every once in a while, I would write the lyrics – or poem or words or whatever it is when there's no music with it – and I would bring it to the studio."

The result is a river of DNA-shaped, diaristic songs that derive their strength from their sense of immediacy. As on her previous record, Morissette is inclined to write songs about Big Issues – gratitude, God's relationship to man, reasons to continue living, self-acceptance, ex-boyfriends – and she does so without shame, which usually implies a willingness to show your sins, and here implies a willingness to show your sincerity. Her lyrics are at once so basic and so specific – "Are you still mad I kicked you out of bed? Are you still mad I gave you ultimatums? Are you still mad I compared you to all my forty-year-old male friends?" begins one song – that, weirdly, they achieve universality and self-revelation at the same time.

During the year and a half since she finished her year and a half of touring for *Jagged Little Pill,* Morissette traveled to India and Cuba, trained for and competed in three triathlons, and asked herself whether she wanted to re-engage in public life. How much pressure does she feel for *Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie* to be a success? "I don't feel any," she says, sitting in the white light of the light-filled room, which, on a more practical note, also contains a couch and a table with a six-pack of tangerine spritzers on it and a book on interpreting the I Ching. "The pressure that I felt was before I wrote it. The challenge for me was to see if I could write a record when my whole environment and lifestyle and situation had completely changed, and still be able to write it in a not-self-conscious way. For the first couple of weeks I was writing, I did feel pressure, and I just stopped. I just turned to Glen and said, 'I'll be back; I'm taking off.' I didn't want to write a record motivated by fear – I wanted to write a record that was motivated by inspiration and love. Even if I'm writing about fear, let it be motivated by love. So I went away, and I came back, and I wrote 'That I Would Be Good.' And that was kind of a turning-point song – it allowed me to finally believe I didn't have to write this record. Because I didn't want to *have* to write the record. I wanted to want to write it. And now I feel like I'm finished and the rest is not up to me. I mean, I'll play, and I'll sing it live, and I'll communicate it, and I'll connect with whoever wants to be connected with. But the rest of it is not in my hands."

Why did you decide to be naked in the video for "Thank U"?
I thought of it when I was in the shower, while we were still mastering the record. I was naked, obviously, and I wanted something very raw and present, because that's what the song is. And the last couple of years, the way I feel about my body has changed so

MIM UDOVITCH, *a New York writer, profiled Mariah Carey in RS 779.*

PAGES 56 & 57: GRAY SWEATER BY ISAAC MIZRAHI; CORSET BY LEIGH BANTZOGLOU; SILK SKIRT BY DRIES VAN NOTEN



that I don't see it as just an ornament, partly because of the triathlon training. Now who I am inside determines how I feel about my body instead of the other way around. Because I had been at both extremes: seeing my body as just an aesthetic presence and then going to the opposite extreme and wearing overalls for two years. Now I'm somewhere in the middle.

Let's talk about your childhood. What's your earliest memory?

Living in Germany when I was three or four – I just remember being with my twin brother in a kindergarten class and thinking that if I put my hands over my eyes, no one could see me. I vividly remember that.

And do we think that that's revealing, that you wanted to cover yourself and not be seen?

If we want it to be revealing, it shall be, and if we don't, it won't. I think my most enjoyable moment on earth is when I do feel seen, and when I am privileged enough to be able to see someone else. I think it's the biggest gift we can give each other.

It's kind of a contradiction: wanting to be seen, and all the loose clothes and the hair in the face.

Well, it's equally exciting and horrifying to be seen. To be seen before you see yourself is a very scary thing.

Do you remember your first kiss?

Yup. I was in grade eight. I mean, my first real kiss; I had my first kiss when I was in grade one – that was more of a cheek kiss, but he was definitely my boyfriend. His name was Jeffrey, and I'm very curious to see where he is right now and what he's doing.

And who initiated this romance?

We were both equally into each other. It was great. He's the template by which I measure all men. It lasted many months. And we were exclusive. And the one in grade eight, we were both about to go into class, at the bottom of a set of stairs, and he leaned over and kissed me. It was very exciting. I had had a crush on him for a year.

It must be so difficult to be the boy in a sudden-first-move situation, don't you think?

I think more women are making first moves. I reached a point over the last few years where I've been making the first move and not really worrying about it.

And what's your success rate been?

It's been pretty good. In my experience, the first kiss rarely happens unless both people are ready for it. It's not as though you just grab somebody's head and say, "I don't know whether you like me or not, but I'm going to plant one on you." Usually you have a sense.

Speaking as a former child star, what was your picture of the glamour you were going for when you started out?

It wasn't so much the glamour per se, with the diamonds and the boas, as it was the happiness that I thought could be attained from achieving something, from the praise and the fulfillment. And a lot of what the motivating force was was that somehow, if I could communicate to a lot of people, that would validate me. I didn't know that fame is the same as not being famous – only more so. Everything is exactly the same, only amplified.

What are the advantages of fame, besides a pingpong table in every residence?

I don't have one in my other house, actually – I should. One of the advantages that I came to see later on is that it's a good gauge of what kind of person you're dealing with. You can tell a lot about a person without having to say a single word, just from what their energy is around fame.

Like . . . ?

Whether someone wants something from me or whether someone will feel better just by spending time around me when it has nothing to do with having a conversation with me, it has more to do with the fact that they somehow feel that they would be more worthy if they're around me.



Which was pretty much your own attitude: that you would be more worthy if you were around your famous self.

Right. And the charm of having understood that about myself is that I understand it about other people. So while it gets frustrating, it doesn't enrage me. I'm much more compassionate now to other people.

I don't know – I bet you were always compassionate to other people, and the thing you learned was to be compassionate to yourself. Like the reverse of the golden rule: Do unto yourself as you do unto others. And what are the disadvantages?

The disadvantage, not so much now as when I was adjusting to it, was in certain cities – especially where I was playing – not being able to walk down the street and look people in the eye and keep my head up. It was something I so much enjoyed doing – being able to walk down streets and just connect with people and look at them, and when they'd be looking at me, they'd be looking at me for a myriad of different reasons and not because they recognized me. Now when people look at me, I always wonder whether they recognize me or whether they're just looking at some brunette woman walking down the street. I miss the sense of community where you all feel equal.

I guess you weren't looking for quite that level of success.

How can you? I mean, you can think about it, but I don't think you can create it.

Certainly not as inexpensively as you did it, anyway. When you stopped touring for "Jagged Little Pill," your press at the time said that you were going to go right back into the studio.

And I had every intention of doing it, too. But I think that I underestimated the amount of things I needed to process before that needed to happen.

I'm sure you needed a nap.

A conceptual nap that lasted a year and a half but was so necessary. Even though I feel like I did more work on a whole different level in the last year and a half than I did in the year and a half that I was touring.

What kind of work?

Just emotional work and spiritual work and just . . . investigative work, you know? I just wanted to get right back to where I had started, to see if I really wanted to continue doing this. If I had to unlearn certain things, I wanted to unlearn them, and if I had to question certain things, I wanted to question them. And if that meant I wasn't going to write another record, then I was willing to deal with that. So I stopped. And I lived the life that I wanted to live outside of the career, because ever since I was nine, I've been very focused on my music, and that was always my number one priority. I had never really investigated what life would be like if I switched the priorities around. So I just got away from the public world and read and traveled.

Where did you travel to?

India. I traveled to Canada quite often, and I spent time in San Francisco, which I love. And I went to Cuba. A whole bunch of us went. Artists and actors and people in the political world and people in investment banking, just sort of as a cultural exchange. I was the only Canadian on the trip, so for me, obviously, it wasn't as much of a coup, because I would have been able to go whenever I wanted, but it was amazing to watch the experience through American people's eyes.

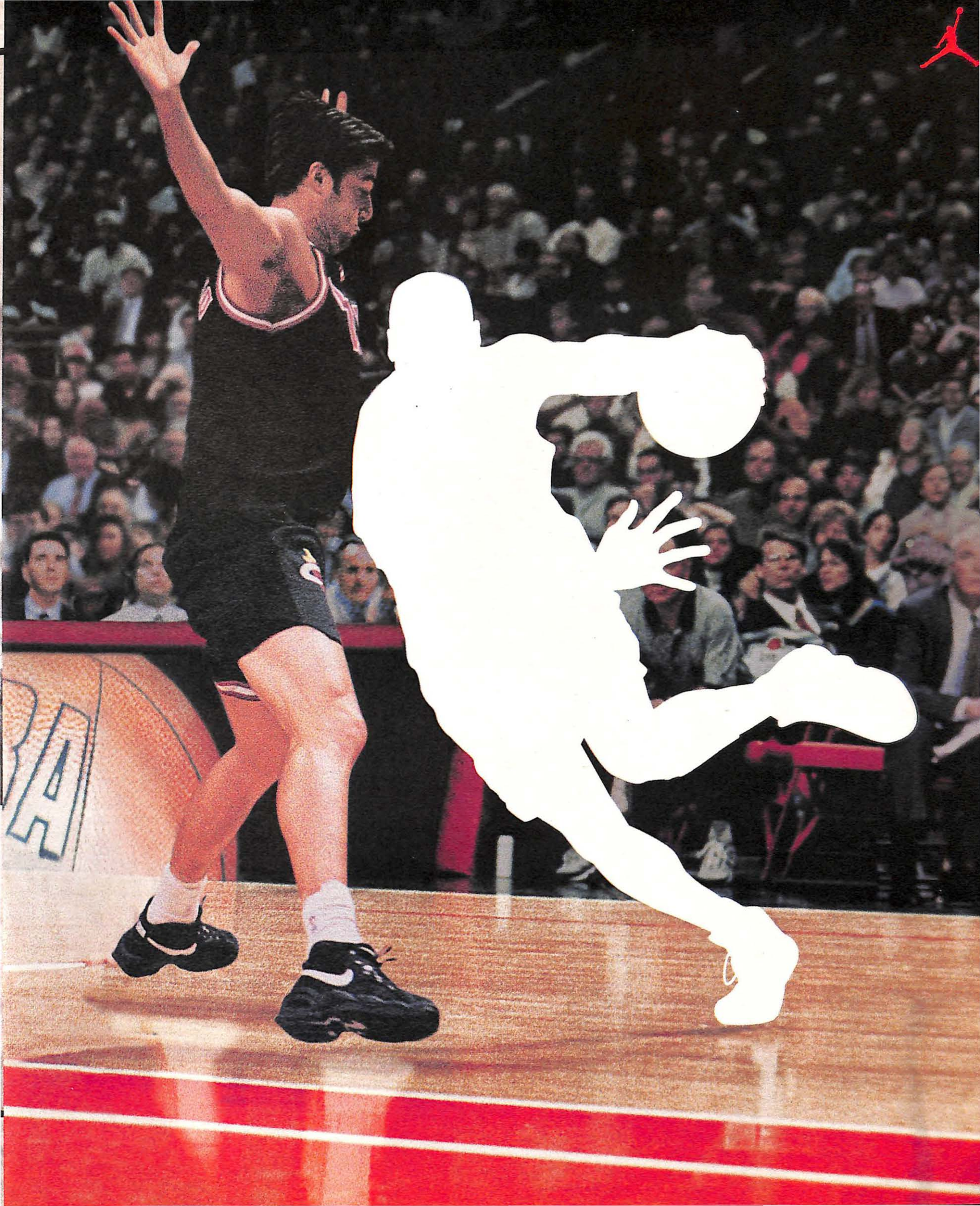
Who were the investment bankers? Just kidding. Who were the actors?

Obviously, you know.

No, I don't know. Did I say it knowingly? Really, I have no idea.

People have been asking, because one of the people

THE CHALLENGE WAS TO SEE IF I COULD WRITE A RECORD WHEN MY WHOLE LIFESTYLE AND SITUATION HAD COMPLETELY CHANGED, AND STILL BE ABLE TO WRITE IT IN A NOT-SELF-CONSCIOUS WAY."



was Leonardo DiCaprio. But there were a bunch of other people. There were about twenty of us.

And when you went to India, did you go with other people?

It was a Christmas gift to my mom and two of my aunts, so we all went together. It was sort of the goddess trip.

And it's all over the record, that trip. It reminded me of "Kashmir"-era Led Zeppelin. I wondered whether that was intentional.

No. My gravitating toward minor chords has just been something I've always enjoyed doing, and some of the tendency toward those sounds of late has been attributed to my trip to India. I think some of it is subconsciously something that happened with that trip, but the rest of it probably has nothing to do with India at all. It's just my taste in chord changes.

Well, people like to have reasons, though I guess sound is not necessarily a thing with a reason. Do you think the record ended up having themes, being a record "about" something? I'm hoping that the answer, again, is Leonardo DiCaprio.

Right. I think the themes are not having to look outside of ourselves to find who we are. And that being in different environments that are in keeping with who we think we are, or that aren't in keeping with who we think we are, helps us further define who we are. Not to say that I think we should hide away on some mountaintop and never function in the physical world again once we think we know who we are.

Maybe because you were defined so aggressively from the outside for the year and a half after "Jagged Little Pill"?

And not just a year and a half – twenty-four years.

You've often talked about feeling a lot of pressure as a child.

That was more about being told that I had to be kind and smart in order to be accepted, whether that was in reaction to report cards or doing something for which I got a lot of praise, and obviously feeling good about myself when I got a lot of praise and not feeling good about myself when I didn't. When I was very helpful and nurturing and maternal, I got the thumbs up, and when I wasn't those things, I was seen as sort of selfish. And I felt like I had to mother every male in my life, basically – brothers, father, men that I worked with, men at my school.

Were you a fearful child? Like being afraid that your closet was the entrance to a hell mouth like Sunnydale High School in "Buffy the Vampire Slayer"? But you don't watch television, do you?

No.

That's un-American. But since you're Canadian, I guess that's all right. Anyway, were you afraid of things like that, as well as more general, emotional fears?

Yeah. I was afraid of my basement. But mostly just afraid of conflict and afraid of my own emotions and how intense they all were, and how I felt completely out of control. I was also in environments where everyone was much older than I was, so I was playing the role of someone who was forty years old when I was thirteen.

Which is every thirteen-year-old's dream, in a way.

Yeah, and it was my dream, and I was excited to be there, but it wasn't a peaceful place. My emotional immaturity was overlooked due to the fact that I could hold my own in business environments. And it was funny because often I wanted to remind them of it in order for them to be able to cut me some slack, but I also didn't want to remind them, because I really enjoyed being on their wavelength and being treated as an equal, so I didn't remind them when I probably should have.

I think, in a way, being able to go back and be thirteen when you're older is probably better than having to do it when you're thirteen. What artists were influential to you then, when you were growing up?

I listened to everything, from a lot of Abba to Carole King.

You know, I can't say I hear Abba's influence in your work.

Really? I do. Just in their sense of melody and their unabashed popness, which I love. I listened to Bob Dylan when I was younger, more because my father was listening to him than because I went out and bought a Bob Dylan CD. I basically listened to everything my father was listening to. I was more focused on the entertainment value as opposed to what was being communicated on an emotional level, even though I feel that, as if by default, I was subliminally being injected with some emotion.

I know what you mean, but I don't know that it's so subliminal. It's kind of the nice thing about pop music that it makes what's being communicated on an emotional level and entertainment into one entity.



ALANIS (SECOND FROM RIGHT) WITH MOM, A FRIEND AND DAD, TORONTO, 1991

Yeah. There were a lot of songs about heartache that I like to think I was appreciating just for the music, but now that you just said that, I think it was probably exactly in keeping with my view of love relationships at the time. Carole King was in keeping with that.

Even though you're supposed to be the queen of pain, there are some songs on this record that are positively upbeat.

Yeah, it's funny, because I felt, especially over the last few years, that I had to be self-protective and go into a shell of sorts in order to survive, and it denied me . . . exuberance. When I was a teenager, I felt like I had to be positive and laughing and upbeat and maternal in all my friendships and interactions, and I felt that nobody would want to hear about any pain or difficulty that I was going through. If you hear the records that I did between when I was nine and when I was eighteen, there are some references to difficulties or pain, but I think, musically especially, it's very upbeat. It was very smiling-all-the-time, even when I wasn't happy.

Over the last few years, in certain situations, being positive or having a smile on my face was an open invitation to take advantage of what seemed like openness in me. Or to presume that I would say yes to everything, presume that I could be congenial at the cost of my own needs. And to temper that, it was easy for me to not smile. It's funny that the very lifestyle I entered into at the time *Jagged Little Pill* came out is the lifestyle where you have to, just for survival's sake, keep a lot of people at arm's length. And I really think I threw the baby out with the bath water.

Do you remember your dreams?

Mmm-hmm. There's been a few recurring ones. Two of them, actually. One of them is, I run through houses and homes, and in and up and around trapdoors, and I'm in search of something. And then the other one I have is elevator dreams, where I'm in an elevator and the higher I get up, the more prickly the air gets. It gets prickly, like you can see the air, and the building starts to shake the higher I get. And then the elevator door opens on the top floor and there's just a huge earthquake.

And what's your interpretation of these dreams?

The obstacle-course one is about my always – well, not necessarily always, but more often than not – being in a position where I have to find a way through things. I enjoy being in a position where I take care of people and situations and finding a way to get through things. Like, I'm the kind of person you'd probably want to be with if the house caught on fire. I love looking out for people, so on this obstacle course, I'm trying to find some kind of route for us all to get through.

So we'd want you on "Gilligan's Island"?

Yes, I'd be very resourceful. The elevator dream I haven't had in a really long time. There was always somebody on the top floor, though. It wasn't as if I got up there and I was alone – there was always somebody there to, like, whisk me away and go to safety.

Somebody specific?

Well, in one of the dreams, it was Paul Reiser.

And what's your interpretation of that?

I don't know – he seems friendly and sort of paternal. And as if he enjoys life; you'd probably feel safe with him. He's sexy in a safe kind of a way, which, to me, is the sexiest – that whole seems-very-communicative situation seems very sexy to me.

So you don't go for the bad boy?

Used to. There's a turning point over the last three years where I no longer gravitate to that which kicks my ass.

You don't think the second dream is the fear-of-success dream that it obviously is?

The elevator one? Could be.

What, to you, constitutes infatuation?

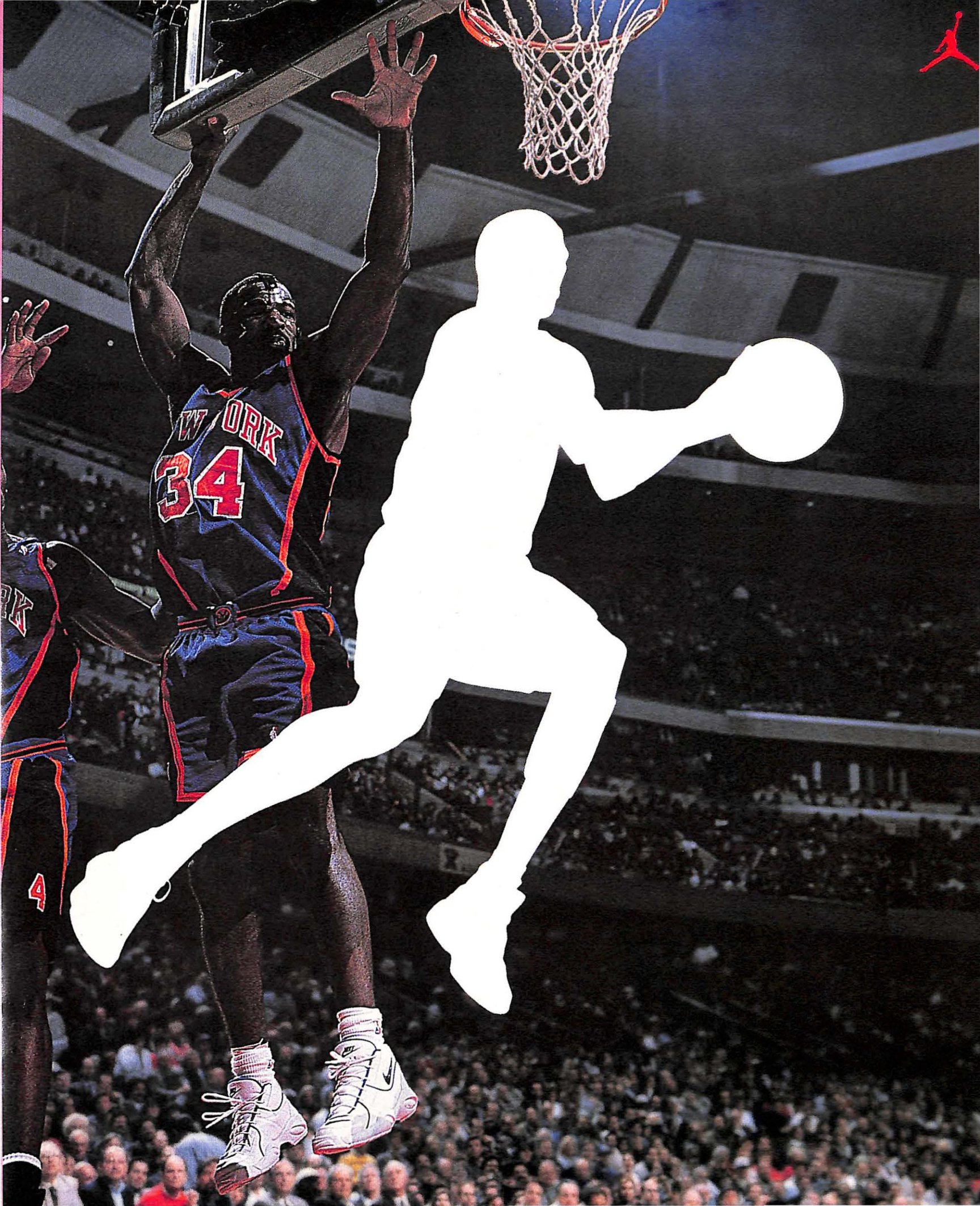
For me, just not being able to eat, not being able to sleep, not being able to stop thinking about someone, my heart beating fast.

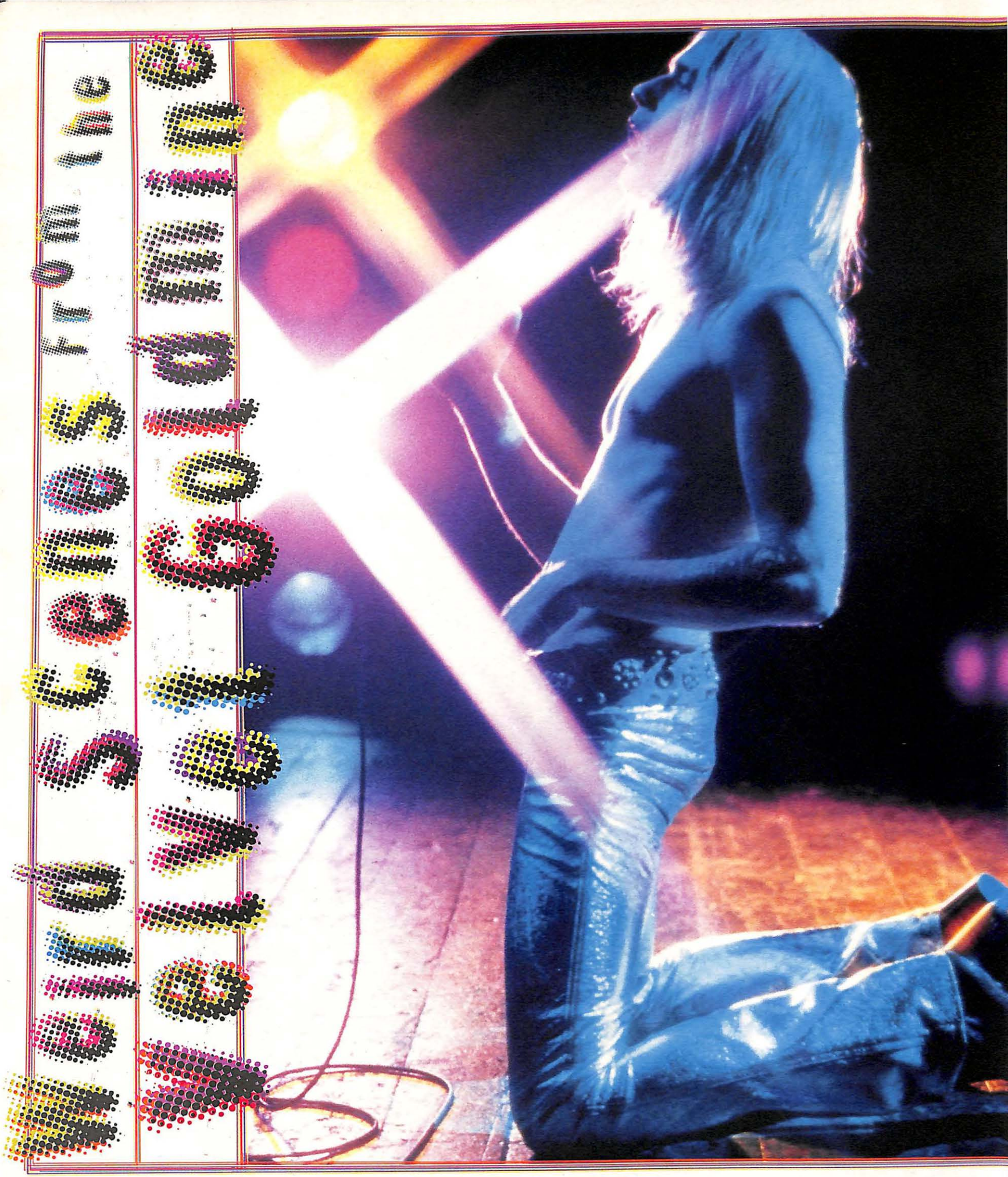
Oh, just that. Do you have an infatuation you're addicted to at the moment, O supposed former infatuation junkie?

There was a person I was infatuated with at the time that I wrote that song ["So Pure"], and I was very much trying to deny it. And I finally said to myself that it was fine, that it was fine to just be infatuated and that I didn't have to siphon it through my intellect or my quote-unquote psychological awareness, that I didn't have to explain it, that I could just [*Cont. on 141*]

"I THOUGHT THAT SOMEHOW, IF I COULD COMMUNICATE TO A LOT OF PEOPLE, THAT WOULD VALIDATE ME. I DIDN'T KNOW THAT FAME IS THE SAME AS NOT BEING FAMOUS – ONLY MORE SO."

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34



A new movie with Ewan McGregor and Jonathan Rhys Meyers brings back the decadent days of Bowie, Iggy and glam rock

by David Fricke

TODD HAYNES WAS, IN HIS own words, "a little short of being there." But he remembers the teenage girls – the flashy, precocious, glitter-rock fillies – that he went to school with in Southern California in the early 1970s.

"They were the smoking girls, the tough girls," Haynes says with lingering awe, "the ones wearing shiny red nail polish and lipstick, jewelry, little shoes with big heels and straps around the ankles. They were talking about Iggys and Ziggys – bi this and bi that: 'Bowie's bi, Elton's bi.' And I'm going, 'What the fuck are they talking about? Bi what?' "

One of America's most acclaimed experimental filmmakers, the writer-director of the provocative independent features *Poison* (1991) and *Safe* (1995), Haynes, 37, also recalls being startled, awed and even a bit frightened by the album covers of glitter's heyday – "these shocking masks" of pouting, erotic futurists like David Bowie, Marc Bolan of T. Rex, Iggy Pop and Roxy Music's Bryan Ferry. Haynes claims that the portrait of Bowie as a melting, pastel alien on the 1973 LP *Aladdin Sane* was "too disturbing for me at the time. It was too threatening. And it was fascinating. You couldn't *not* look at it.

"The sexuality, the androgyny – this was something otherworldly," Haynes says, eyes still wide with the memory. "It forced categories into complete chaos, in a brilliant way."

Haynes tried to express those feelings in a letter he wrote to Bowie about two years ago. The note was one of several attempts to get the singer to give his paternal blessing – along with permission to license six Bowie songs – to *Velvet Goldmine*, Haynes' film valentine to glitter (named after one of Bowie's great Ziggy Stardust-period B sides). After putting Haynes through a long, hand-wringing wait, Bowie graciously declined on both counts, noting that he had plans for a film of his own on the subject.

It was the best thing that could have happened to Haynes. Liberated from the specific rock history associated with Bowie's songs, Haynes went on to make a movie about the soul of the era: the tidal splash of pop guitars, raging puberty and elegant anarchy that was glitter – or glam, as the English called it – from 1972 to '74. Written and directed by Haynes, starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Ewan McGregor, and powered by a dynamite soundtrack, *Velvet Goldmine* is the most visually sumptuous, sexually vivid film ever made about rock & roll. It may also be the most honest, precisely because of its blurring of truth and fiction – "which they," Haynes says of Bowie, Bolan, et al, "did better than anybody."

Simply put, *Velvet Goldmine* (Haynes did not need Bowie's go-ahead to use the song title) is based on sort-of biography, kind-of fact. Rhys Meyers plays a cherubic androgyne, Brian Slade, who transforms himself with icy calculation into a Space Age, openly bisexual pop god – just as Bowie did in 1972. McGregor brings the same deft mix of emotional finesse and burly physical electricity that he displayed in *Trainspotting* to the part of Curt Wild, a loose-cannon, Iggy-esque punk singer who gets sucked into Slade's glitzy orbit – much as Iggy was Bowie's in-house he-wolf in '72 and '73.

The supporting cast touches other archetypes of the time. Toni Collette juggles posh British and flat Yankee accents as Slade's Angela Bowie-like missis; Eddie Izzard does a superb, cigar-chomping turn as Jerry Devine, Slade's Tony DeFries-style hardball manager. On the soundtrack, Nineties kids Grant Lee Buffalo and Shudder to Think perform original, accurate pastiches of glam hits while Placebo, Teenage Fan Club and members of Radiohead and Sonic Youth put fresh kick into the Stooges' "T.V. Eye," T. Rex's "20th Century Boy" and Roxy Music's moving, valedictory ballad "2HB."

But Haynes is unafraid to fuck with documented events in order to highlight the vital subtext: glam's combined explosions of possibility in art and in sexual identity. At the very start of the film, Haynes suggests that Victorian dandy Oscar Wilde was the real father of glitter – and extraterrestrial by birth. Borrowing Bowie's flirtation with the idea of rock & roll suicide, Haynes tells the story of Slade's free fall from the top with an onstage shooting hoax and a what-made-him-tick narrative style cribbed from *Citizen Kane*. The lack of Bowie songs in the movie – Haynes had hoped to use "Lady Stardust" and "All the Young Dudes," among others – enables the director to celebrate glitter rock's larger canon: Brian Eno's "Baby's on Fire," "Diamond Meadows" by T. Rex, the sultry ballad "Sebastian" by Cockney Rebel.

Velvet Goldmine is also a multitiered love story. Haynes takes glam's bisexual trappings to deeper emotional extremes with an explicitly rendered romance between Slade and Wild. One of the movie's most compelling scenes is a long, tight-focus kiss featuring the two men, shot in harsh light and flat, pregnant silence. There are hints, too, of an



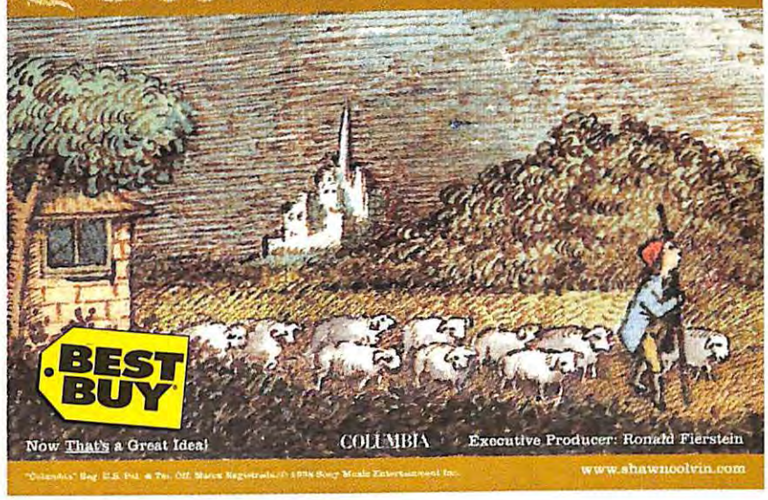
above: Jonathan Rhys Meyers glams up Bowie-style. left: Ewan McGregor merges Iggy Pop with Lou Reed.

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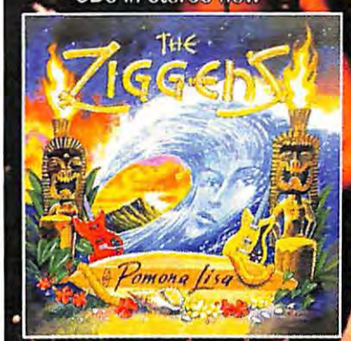
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photo by Basil

ambiguous relationship between Wild and an impressionable fan, Arthur Stuart, played with an adept blend of nerves and wonder by Christian Bale. Using an emerald that passes from Slade to Wild to Stuart, Haynes traces the sensual magnetism – between star and audience and among the stars themselves – that defined glam.

"It's great to see a relationship between two guys in a film, where they go through that and split up," says McGregor, who describes Rhys Meyers as "a lovely snog." "In all the madness, they are at least that normal – that they have relationships that fuck up."

Rhys Meyers says that the kiss was shot quickly, in two takes. Another love scene, ostensibly set on a misty beach, was filmed in Super-8, in a white room with a little sand on the floor. And when the actor finally saw the finished movie, at *Velvet Goldmine*'s May premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, he was stunned by Haynes' rich, tender treatment of the Slade-Wild heart play. "It blew me away," Rhys Meyers raves. "I really wanted Curt and Brian to be in love. I'm sure there were people sitting there going, 'Oh, it's a nice love story, but they're gay.' But it was beautiful."

R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe, one of the film's executive producers, was shocked when, during a studio pitch meeting to raise financing for the film, someone suggested that *Velvet Goldmine* was "a gay movie." Stipe contends that it is "a fantasy about fantasy," about how "you can create and re-create your own identity, as flamboyantly as you wish, from day to day."

Haynes agrees. "I was trying to replicate how glam rock worked as a form, as a style," he says, drinking iced coffee on the asphalt patio of a bar near his lower-Manhattan office. "The challenge was to accomplish what I think is so amazing about Bowie and particularly Roxy Music: that combination of highly referenced irony, pushing it to the limit of camp, but also emotionally resonant – at times arrestingly beautiful, at times fucking hard, rockin' music. How did they ride that delicate wire? Most rock & roll is defined by its authenticity, its ability to shed the surface and the makeup. These artists could foreground the artificiality, make it powerful. That is a trick I tried hard to get into the film – to be full of wit and irony and literary shit but to be moving and enveloping, an emotional trip."

AFTER HE FINISHED "POISON," HIS feature-length debut, which was inspired by the writings of Jean Genet, Haynes was in Hawaii with James Lyons (his editor and, at the time, his boyfriend), and they were talking about an idea Lyons had for a three-part movie about masculinity – how homosexuality is manifest and utilized in the mainstream cultures of the church, the military and glam rock.

"I thought it was an amazing idea," says Haynes, "maybe too much for one film. I said, 'That glam-rock thing, Jim, is pretty cool.' And we earmarked it." While working on *Safe* (starring Julianne Moore as a housewife who becomes allergic to twentieth-century living) and the short *Dotty Gets Spanked* (an odd, loving nod to Lucille Ball), Haynes and Lyons developed the glam-rock story, with Haynes eventually writing the script himself.

Much of his research consisted of listening to the records and reading back issues of the British music weeklies *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express*. As he wrote, Haynes balanced his neofictional tangents – the fake shooting; Arthur's search for the truth a decade later; the flamboyant character of Jack Fairy, a third, phantom wheel in the Slade-Wild relationship – with historical minutiae. For Wild's past, Haynes drew from Iggy (raised in a Michigan trailer park) and from Lou Reed (forced to undergo electroshock therapy as a teenager). A grand circus-cum-press-conference sequence in which Slade answers questions in Oscar Wilde aphorisms was based on a notorious London junket that Bowie's management staged for U.S. critics in the summer of 1972.

Guitarist Ron Asheton, a founding member of the Stooges and an eyewitness to the Iggy-Ziggy scene at its mad height, was stunned by the attention to detail in *Velvet Goldmine*. "When [McGregor] was doing his whole Iggy bit in 'T.V. Eye,' I actually got goose bumps for a second," admits Asheton, who appears on the sound-

"It's great to see a relationship between two guys in a film, where they go through all the madness and split up," says McGregor, who describes Rhys Meyers as "a lovely snog."

DAVID FRICKE *owns an autographed copy of the first Stooges LP. It is not for sale.*

PETER MOUNTAIN



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The Best Of The Tubes (Capitol) 00360
Best Of Dire Straits: Money For Nothing (Warner Bros.) 00713
Stone Temple Pilots: Core (Atlantic) 00981
Primus: Pork Soda (Interscope) 01167
Richard & Linda Thompson: Shoot Out The Lights (Hannibal) 01251
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James Brown: 20 All-Time Greatest Hits (Polydor) 01342
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Yaz: Upstairs At Eric's (Sire) 01828
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Jane's Addiction: Nothing's Shocking (Warner Bros.) ♦ 01967
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The Best Of Joy Division: Permanent (Qwest/Warner Bros.) 02031
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track as a member of the Stoogeaphonic band the Wylde RaTTz. "Whoever made those silver pants, they had it down to the cross-hatchings on the crotch. What gave me a chuckle was when Brian Slade first meets the Iggy character. [McGregor's] all junked out, his head goes back and he's got a cigarette in his mouth. Well, I pulled lit cigarettes out of Iggy's face while he was totally out of it. To me, that was like, 'Been there, done that.' "

Haynes' aspirations for *Velvet Goldmine* far outstripped his resources: a $7 million budget and nine weeks' shooting time in London. According to music supervisor Randy Poster, less than ten percent of that budget went to the music: thirty-three songs, seventeen written or recorded specially for the project. "We really had to bend over backward," says Poster. "But people were helpful. Passion converted into savings."

Former Grant Lee Buffalo bassist Paul Kimble produced the music by the Venus in Furs, the ersatz Spiders From Mars group featuring singer Thom Yorke and guitarist Jon Greenwood of Radiohead, ex-Suede guitarist Bernard Butler and Roxy Music saxophonist Andy Mackay. "The whole session in England was chaotic," Kimble remembers. "Todd would say, 'We're shooting this scene on Wednesday.' It would be Sunday, and we'd need to have a song done and mixed by Tuesday so they could have tapes to work with." The Furs' basic tracks were done in two days, and, Kimble says, "the stuff I did with Thom Yorke took an hour, tops."

Haynes made astute, timely choices in casting. *Velvet Goldmine* came to Rhys Meyers' attention as he was rebounding from disappointment – he'd just gotten the script for *Boogie Nights*, only to learn that Mark Wahlberg had already nabbed the male lead. Haynes signed McGregor before the fast-rising Scot landed the big-bucks role of the young Obi-Wan Kenobi in George Lucas' upcoming *Star Wars* prequel.

Rhys Meyers and McGregor were not experts on glam. A native of County Cork, Ireland, and the son of a traditional-folk musician, Rhys Meyers was born in 1977, three years after glam had fizzled in popularity. McGregor was a year old, living in a small town in Scotland, when Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust* album was issued in 1972. But both actors took to their parts with vigor.

For one thing, Rhys Meyers and McGregor did their own singing for nearly all the performance sequences. Rhys Meyers even recorded a demo tape for Haynes, pre-production, to prove he could do the job. "He and Ewan wanted to absorb themselves into the characters," remarks Stipe, "and they were willing to humiliate themselves in a recording studio to do that. But goddamn, they can sing."

McGregor watched Iggy concert videos – a 1992 reel, *Kiss My Blood*, and the great peanut-butter-and-crowd-surfing footage from the 1970 Cincinnati Pop Festival. But, he says, "The only way to reach what I did [onstage] was to throw myself around in rehearsal and see what happens." McGregor also went through Iggy steps with choreographer Lea Anderson, who had created a dance work based on the Stooges' physical movements.



"It blew me away," raves Rhys Meyers of his love scene with McGregor in "Velvet Goldmine."

"Then," McGregor says, "it was a case of getting three cameras set up and lighting the stage, because they never knew where I would be at any moment. And I would go. I was completely taken over by it. When they said 'Cut!,' I was rather surprised to find myself in front of a camera. I'd lost the plot entirely."

McGregor and Haynes insist that any echoes of the late Kurt Cobain in Curt Wild were an accident of McGregor's remarkably similar physiognomy and long blond hair in the film. McGregor picked up the low, gravelly twang in Wild's voice from listening to Robbie Robertson in *The Last Waltz*. Haynes named the character after Curt Davis, a friend of James Lyons who had died of AIDS. Davis was "this punk guy with a brilliant mind," Haynes says. "I think he used the name Curt Wild in some of his writing. So we adopted that affectionately."

Rhys Meyers' problem was how to play a Bowie-like character without relying too much on the real, living thing. Besides, he notes, "David Bowie is a fucking character invented by David Jones. So it was like, 'Who am I supposed to play?' " Rhys Meyers concentrated on becoming a believable rock star – to the point where, during filming, he rented an apartment, bought a guitar and amplifier, and tried writing his own music: "I hung out there, had different people come over, never actually left this apartment unless I had to. I wanted to realistically *be* a rock star – would people come and buy tickets to see me at a gig?"

Rhys Meyers tried another odd method of study. He sat in the back of old black London taxis, riding through the city at night. "I'd look out the window," he says, "and try to see what those people saw at the time. After doing it for two or three nights, I knew I never could. I could only see what I saw."

Ultimately, *Velvet Goldmine* is Haynes' very personal vision of glam – what he might have seen if he'd been hip to it at the time, what he sees as its legacy now. He points out that his script originally featured a radically different ending: two butch London dockworkers in a fierce kiss. As the camera pulled away, they would be shown on a barge, finally breaking apart and going back to work. But Haynes scrapped the scene, a backhanded critique of contemporary macho-gay clichés, because it cheapened the electricity between Slade and Wild.

"What was interesting to me about the sexuality of the early Seventies, especially in England," Haynes explains, "was that it wasn't even gay. It was about opposites attracting each other: men and women, gays and straights. It's much easier to accept categories – 'that gay person over there, doing their thing, way away from me.'

"But bisexuality," he says, with a bright, troublemaker's smile, "implicates everybody." ◆

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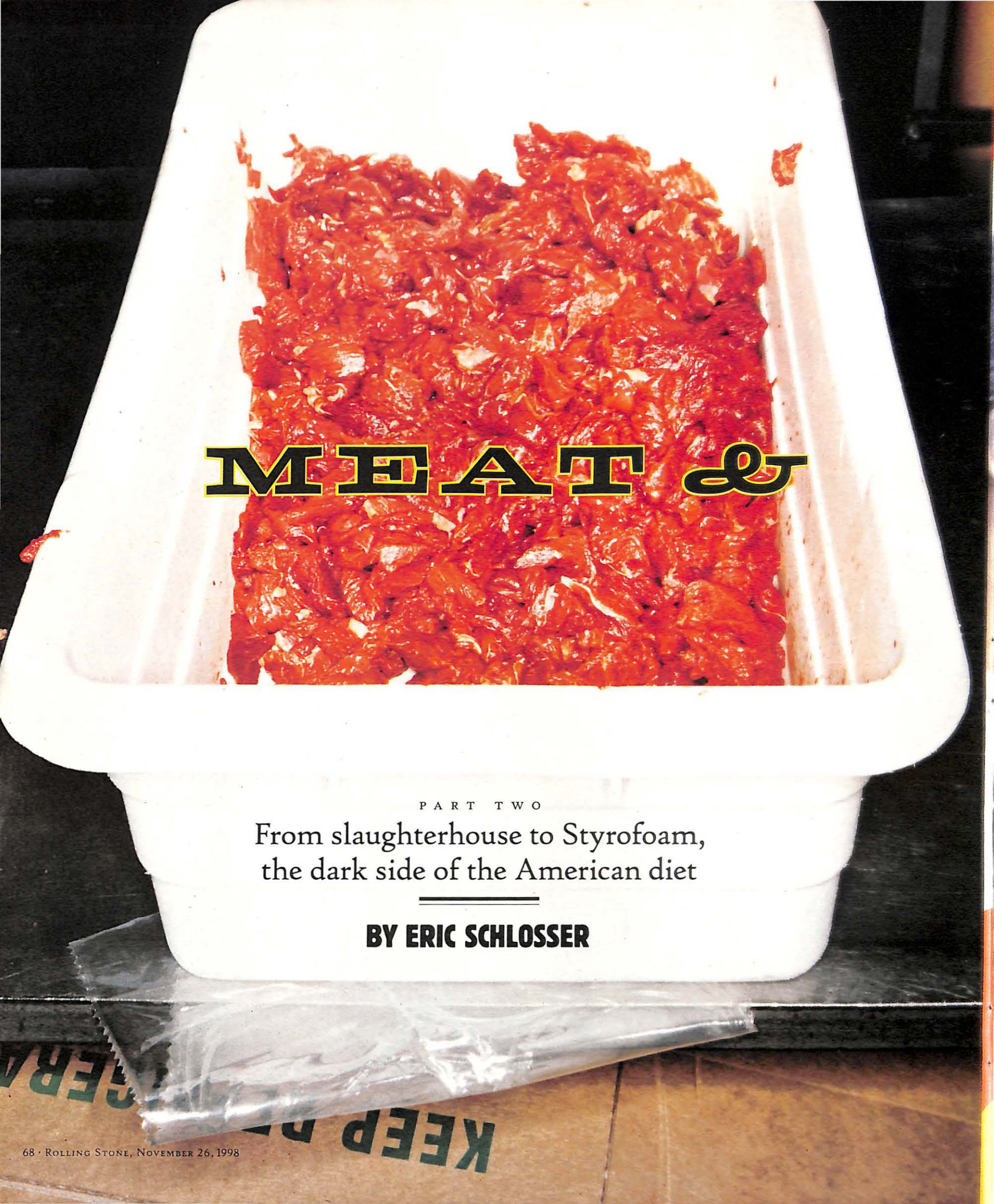


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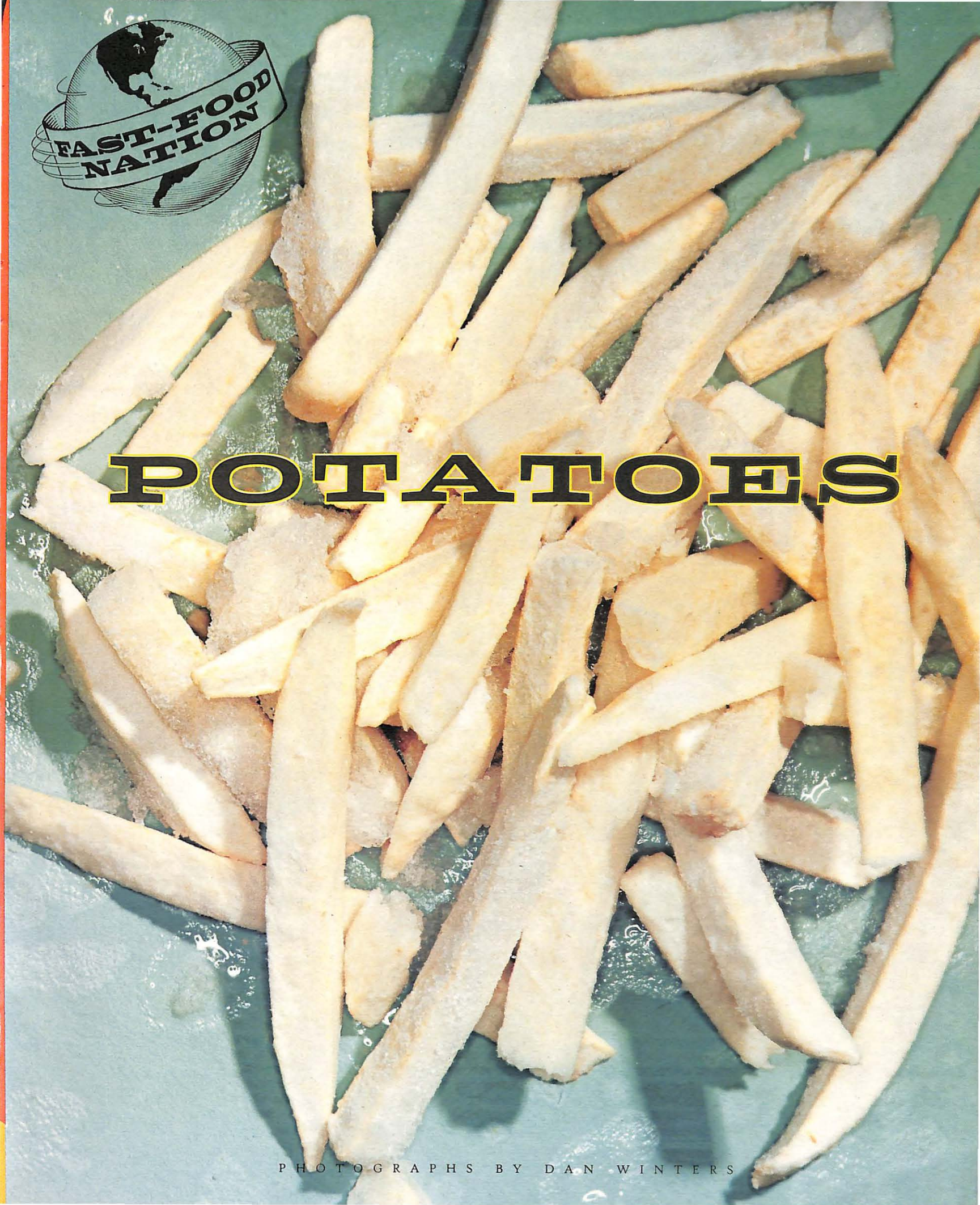


MEAT &

PART TWO

From slaughterhouse to Styrofoam, the dark side of the American diet

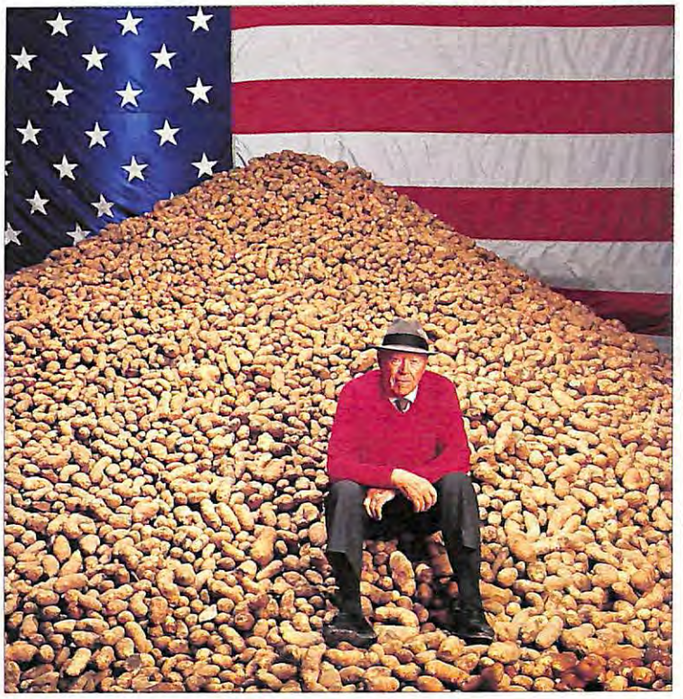
BY ERIC SCHLOSSER


FAST-FOOD NATION
POTATOES
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN WINTERS

IN MUCH THE SAME WAY THAT THE fast-food industry changed our retail economy, eliminating small businesses and encouraging the spread of uniformity, fast food has transformed American agriculture.

A GENERATION AGO, THREE-QUARTERS OF the meals consumed in the United States were made at home. Today, most of the meals that Americans eat are prepared outside the home, mainly at fast-food restaurants. The rise of the fast-food industry has changed not only what Americans eat but also how their meals are made – at every step, from the farm to the ovens in a commercial kitchen. Aside from the salad greens, tomatoes and some toppings, most fast food arrives at the restaurant frozen, canned, dehydrated or freeze-dried. A fast-food kitchen is merely the final stage in a vast system of mass production. America's favorite foods, like its automobiles and television sets, are now manufactured by computerized, highly automated machines.

In much the same way that the fast-food industry changed the nation's retail economy, eliminating small businesses, encouraging the spread of chains and uniformity, fast food has transformed American agriculture. The centralized purchasing decisions of large restaurant chains and their demand for standardized products have given a handful of multinational corporations an unprecedented degree of power over the nation's food supply. During the 1980s, while the virtues of the free market were being proclaimed, giant agribusiness companies – such as Cargill, ConAgra and IBP – gained control of one agricultural market after another. The concentration of power in the food-processing industry has driven down the prices offered to American farmers. In 1980, about thirty-seven cents of every consumer dollar spent on food went to the farmer. Today, only twenty-three cents goes to the farmer – a decline of forty percent. Family farms are now being replaced by gigantic corporate farms with absentee owners. Rural communities are losing their middle class and becoming socially stratified, divided among a small wealthy elite and large numbers of the working poor. The hardy, independent farmers whom Thomas Jefferson considered the bedrock of democracy are truly a vanishing breed. The United States now has more prison inmates than full-time farmers.



The Potato Baron and his crop: J.R. Simplot (in 1995, above, and in 1943, right) won his first potato sorter from his business partner in a coin toss in 1928. Now, at age eighty-nine, he is one of the richest men in America; though his company traffics in everything from broccoli processing to silica mining, he secured his legacy with the potato. The J.R. Simplot Co. supplies McDonald's with about half of its frozen french fries.

In the potato fields and processing plants of Idaho, in the ranch lands of Colorado, in the feedlots and slaughterhouses of the high plains, you can see the effects of fast food on the nation's rural life, its environment, its workers – and its health. Farmers and ranchers, the icons of the American West, are losing their independence, essentially becoming hired hands for the giant multinationals, or being forced off the land entirely. Recent changes in the beef industry have made meatpacking the most dangerous job in the United States and have introduced a deadly pathogen, E. coli O157:H7, into hamburger meat, a food mass-marketed to children. And the values, the culture and the industrial arrangements of our fast-food nation are more and more being exported to the rest of the world.

A hamburger and french fries are an inexpensive, convenient meal. But the real cost of America's love affair with fast food is not always reflected in the price on the menu. After all, you are what you eat.

ERIC SCHLOSSER *is writing a book about the fast-food industry. Part One of this series appeared in RS 794.*

MR. SPUD

TO REACH THE J.R. SIMPLOT plant in Aberdeen, Idaho, you drive through downtown Aberdeen (population 1,400), past the modest shops on Main Street. Then turn right at the Tiger Hut, a hamburger stand named for the local high school football team, cross the railroad tracks where the freight cars are loaded with sugar beets, drive about a quarter of a mile and you're there. It smells like someone is cooking potatoes. The Simplot plant is low and square, clean and neat, with a big American flag flying out front. Steam rises from a narrow chimney on the roof. Aberdeen sits in the heart of Bingham County, which grows more potatoes than any other county in the United States; the Simplot plant runs twenty-four hours a day, 310 days a year, turning potatoes into french fries. It's a small facility by industry standards, built in the late 1950s. It processes about a half-million pounds of potatoes a day.

Inside the building, a maze of red conveyor belts crisscrosses in and out of machines that wash, sort, peel, slice, blanch, blow-dry, fry and flash freeze potatoes. Workers in white coats and hard hats keep everything running smoothly, monitoring the controls, checking the fries for imperfections. The place has a cheery, Eisenhower-era feeling, as though a fantasy of technological progress, of better living through frozen food, has come to life. Looming over the whole enterprise is the spirit of one man: John Richard Simplot, America's great potato baron, whose willingness to take risks and seemingly inexhaustible energy built an empire based on french fries. In many ways, Simplot embodies the contradictory traits that have guided the development of the American West, an odd mix of rugged individualism and dependence on public land and resources. In a portrait that hangs above the reception desk at the Aberdeen plant, J.R. Simplot has the sly grin of a gambler who has scored big.



Simplot was born in 1909. His family left Dubuque, Iowa, the following year and eventually settled in Idaho. The Snake River Reclamation Project promised cheap water for irrigation, funded by the government, that would convert the desert of southern Idaho into lush farmland. Simplot's father became a homesteader, obtaining land for free and clearing it with a steel rail dragged between two teams of horses. Simplot grew up working hard on the farm. He rebelled against his domineering father, dropped out of school at the age of fifteen and left home. He found work at a potato ware-

LOUIS PSIHOYOS/MATRIX (LEFT); COURTESY OF SIMPLOT ARCHIVES

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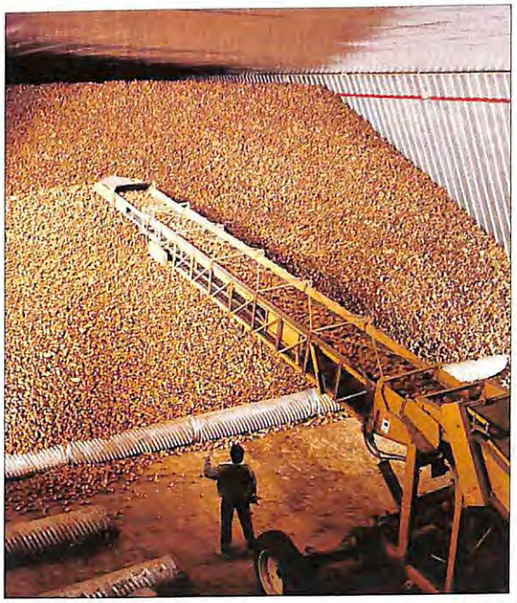


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LAST YEAR, THE TYPICAL AMERICAN ATE about thirty pounds of french fries, mostly at fast-food restaurants. Indeed, french fries are ordered more frequently at American restaurants than any other dish.



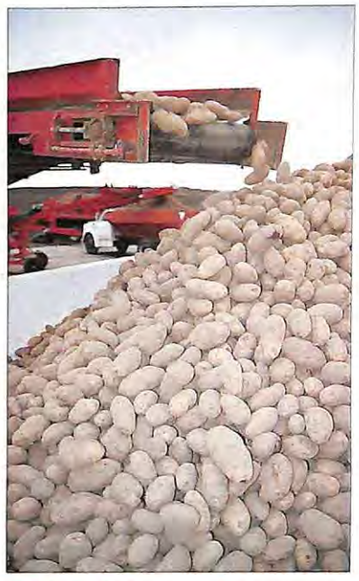
During the 1960s, Idaho's potato output surpassed that of Maine, the previous leader, due to the explosion of the french-fry industry and the productivity gains made by Idaho farmers. Since 1980, the tonnage of potatoes grown in Idaho has almost doubled.

house in the small town of Declo, Idaho. He sorted potatoes with a "shaker sorter," a hand-held device, nine to ten hours a day for thirty cents an hour. At the boardinghouse where he rented a room, Simplot met a group of public-school teachers who were being paid not in cash but in interest-bearing scrip. Simplot bought the scrip from the teachers for fifty cents on the dollar – and then sold the scrip to a local bank for ninety cents on the dollar. With his earnings, Simplot bought a rifle, an old truck and 600 hogs for one dollar a head. He built a cooker in the desert, stoked it with sagebrush, shot wild horses, skinned them, sold their hides for two dollars each, cooked their meat and fed it to his hogs through the winter. That spring, J.R. Simplot sold the hogs for $7,500 and became a potato farmer.

The Idaho potato industry was just getting started in the 1920s. The state's altitude, warm days, cool nights, light volcanic soil and abundance of irrigated water made it an ideal setting to grow Russett Burbank potatoes. Simplot leased 160 acres, then bought farm equipment and a team of horses. He learned how to grow potatoes from his landlord, Lindsey Maggert. In 1928, Simplot and Maggert purchased an electric potato sorter, a remarkable new labor-saving device. Simplot began sorting potatoes for his friends and neighbors, but Maggert did not want to share the new sorter with anyone else. The two men fought over the machine and then agreed to settle who owned it with the flip of a silver dollar. J.R. Simplot won the coin toss, got to keep the sorter, sold all his farm equipment and started his own business in a Declo potato cellar. He traveled the countryside, sorting potatoes for farmers, plugging the rudimentary machine into the nearest available light socket. Soon he was buying and selling potatoes, opening warehouses and forming relationships with commodities brokers nationwide. When J.R. Simplot needed timber for a new warehouse, he and his men would head to Yellowstone Park and chop down some trees. Within a decade, Simplot was the largest shipper of potatoes in the West, maintaining thirty-three warehouses in Oregon and Idaho.

Simplot also shipped onions. In 1941, he started to wonder why a company in California, the Burbank Corp., was ordering so many of his onions. Simplot went to California and followed one of the company's trucks to a prune orchard in Vacaville, where the Burbank Corp. was using prune dryers to make dehydrated onions. Simplot immediately bought a six-tunnel prune dryer and set up his own dehydration plant west of Caldwell, Idaho. Three months later, the United States entered World War II. Simplot's company sold dehydrated onions to the U.S. Army and then perfected a technique for drying potatoes. The Simplot Dehydrating Co. quickly became one of the principal suppliers of food to the American military, operating the largest dehydration plant in the world. J.R. Simplot used the profits earned in wartime to buy potato farms and cattle ranches, to build fertilizer plants and lumber mills, to stake mining claims and open a huge phosphate mine on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. By the end of World War II, Simplot was growing his own potatoes, fertilizing them with his own phosphate, processing them at his factories, shipping them in boxes from his lumberyards and feeding the leftover potato waste to his cattle. He was thirty-six years old.

After the war, Simplot invested heavily in frozen-food technology. He assembled a team of chemists to develop a product that seemed to have enormous commercial potential: the frozen french fry. Americans were eating more fries than ever before, and the Russett Burbank, with its large size and high starch content, was the perfect potato for frying. Simplot wanted to create a frozen fry that was inexpensive and that tasted just as good as a fresh one. Although Thomas Jefferson brought the Parisian recipe for *pommes frites* to the United States in 1802, french fries did not become well known in this country until the 1920s. According to the food historian Elisabeth Rozin, Americans had traditionally eaten their potatoes boiled, mashed or baked. The french fry was popularized in the United States by World War I veterans who had enjoyed the dish in Europe and by the drive-in restaurants that subsequently arose in the 1930s and 1940s. Fries could be served without a fork or a knife; they were easy to eat behind the wheel. But they were extremely time-consuming to prepare. Simplot's chemists experimented with various techniques for the mass production of french fries. The technical problems were solved in 1953, and J.R. Simplot earned the first patent for frozen french fries. Sales of the product were initially disappointing. Although the frozen fries were precooked and could be baked in an oven, they tasted best when reheated in hot oil, which limited their appeal to busy housewives. Simplot needed to find institutional customers, restaurant owners who would recognize the tremendous advantages of using his frozen fries.



"The french fry (was) . . . almost sacrosanct for me," Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's Corp., wrote in his memoirs, "its preparation a ritual to be followed religiously."

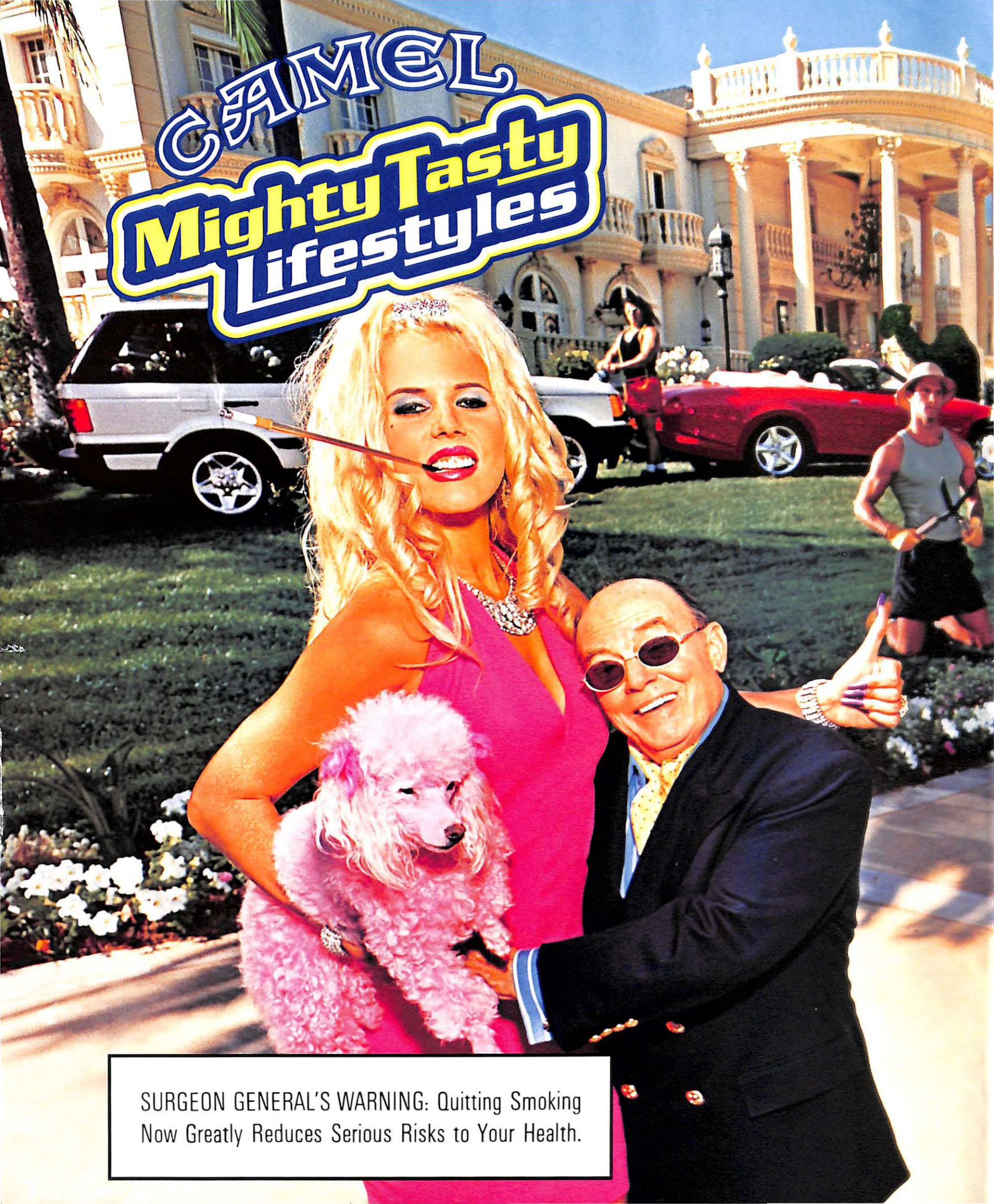
"The french fry (was) . . . almost sacrosanct for me," Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's Corp., wrote in his memoirs, "its preparation a ritual to be followed religiously." The success of Richard and Mac McDonald's hamburger stand had been based as much on the quality of their french fries as on the taste of their burgers. The McDonald brothers had devised an elaborate system for making crisp french fries, one that was later perfected by the restaurant chain. McDonald's cooked thinly sliced Russett Burbanks in a mixture of vegetable oil and beef tallow, using special fryers designed to keep the oil temperature above 325 degrees. As their restaurant chain expanded, it became more difficult – and yet all the more important – to maintain the consistency and quality of the fries. J.R. Simplot met with Ray Kroc in 1965. Switching to frozen french fries appealed to Kroc, as a way to ensure uniformity and cut labor costs. McDonald's obtained its fresh potatoes from almost 200 different local suppliers, and its employees spent a great deal of their time peeling potatoes. Simplot offered to build a new factory solely for the production of McDonald's french fries. Kroc agreed to try Simplot's fries but made no long-term commitment. The deal was finalized with a handshake.

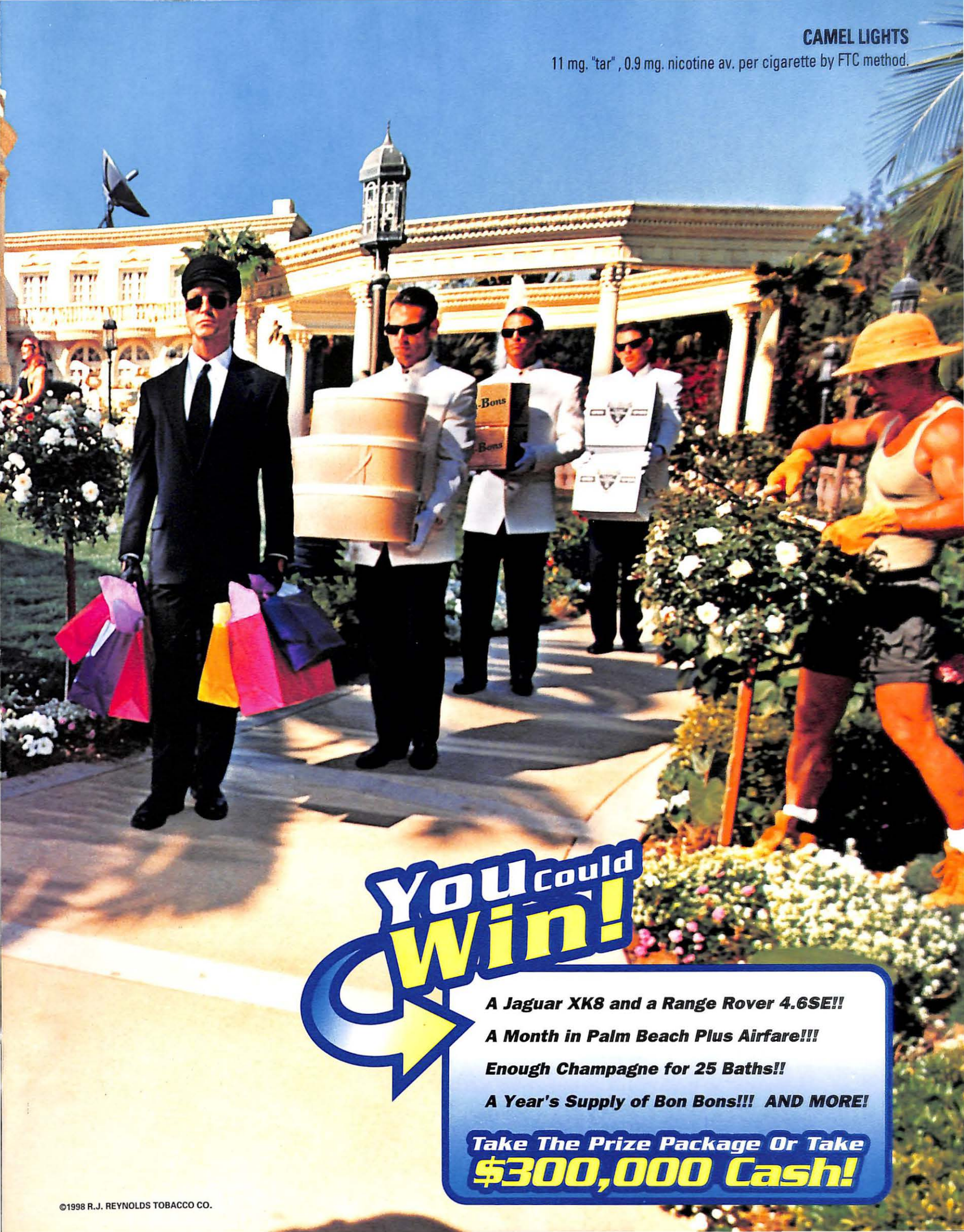
McDonald's began to sell J.R. Simplot's frozen french fries the following year. Customers didn't notice any difference in taste. And the reduced cost of using frozen product made french fries one of the most profitable items on the menu – far more profitable than hamburgers. Simplot quickly became the main supplier of french fries to McDonald's. At the time, McDonald's had about 725 restaurants in the United States. Within a decade, it had more than 3,000. Simplot sold his frozen fries to other restaurant chains, accelerating the growth of the fast-food industry and changing the nation's eating habits. Americans have long consumed more potatoes than any other food except dairy products and wheat flour. In 1960, the typical American ate about three and a half pounds of frozen french fries. Last year, the typical American ate about thirty pounds of frozen french fries. Most of these fries were purchased at fast-food restaurants. Indeed, french fries are ordered more frequently at American restaurants than any other dish.

Today, J.R. Simplot, an eighth-grade dropout, is one of the richest men in the United States. The privately held company that he founded grows and processes corn, peas, broccoli, avocados and carrots, as well as potatoes; feeds and processes cattle; manufac-

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4. Prizes

Grand Prizes: Each Grand prize consists of a choice of one of the following lifestyle prize packages or the cash equivalent of $300,000.* Total approximate retail value of all prizes: $1,200,000.

* Approximate Retail Value

PRIZE DESCRIPTIONS:

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Suburban Gold Digger: Prize (ARV*) - Jaguar XK8 ($75,280), Range Rover 4.6SE ($65,125), 1 year's supply of bon bons ($700), Tanning bed ($2,500), Champagne for 25 baths ($37,500), 1 year's supply of diet cola ($364), Condo for 1 month in Palm Beach, Florida including travel to Palm Beach for 2 ($13,000), Cash ($105,531). Total approximate value of prize: $300,000.

*ARV-Approximate Retail Value

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Prize winners must be licensed drivers at time of prize acceptance. Registration, title, licensing fees and insurance costs if applicable are solely the responsibility of the winners. Prize winners do not have choice of car color or options.

Travel as Prize

Travel must be completed by May 31, 2000. Restrictions and blackout dates may apply. Accommodations are subject to availability and change without notice. Trip companions must also sign and return a liability/publicity release prior to travel. Taxes, tips, alcoholic beverages, ground transportation not specified herein and all other expenses not specified herein are solely the responsibility of winners. All air transportation will be round-trip coach, unless otherwise specified herein, from airport nearest winner's home location. The difference between any stated value and actual value will not be awarded to winners. In the event of cancellation by winner, the ability to reschedule will be allowed only at Sponsor's discretion.

5. Provisional prize winners will be notified by mail by 6/30/99 and will be required to sign and return Affidavit of Eligibility/Liability and Publicity release within 20 days of delivery. Noncompliance within this time period or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable or refused may result in disqualification and an alternate winner may be selected. Provisional prize winners are subject to age verification. All federal, state and local income and other taxes, licenses, fees and insurance are the responsibility of the winners. No substitution, transfer of prizes, or election of cash in lieu of prizes will be permitted except at sole discretion of Sponsor or as specifically set forth herein. One prize per household or family. Sponsor reserves the right to substitute a prize of greater or equal value if the prize chosen is not available. Any prize may be awarded in gift certificates or cash sums at Sponsor's sole discretion. All prizes will be awarded and will be fulfilled in 1999, except for travel, which may be fulfilled in 2000.

6. Any game materials including without limitation the offer, rules and announcement of winners, containing production, printing or typographical errors, or obtained outside authorized, legitimate channels are automatically void; and the liability of Sponsor, if any, is limited to the replacement of such materials and recipient agrees to release Sponsor, its parent, the judging organization and their respective officers, directors, employees and agents from any and all losses, claims, or damages that may result.

7. By accepting a prize, winners agree to grant R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company the right to use their names, biographical information and/or likenesses for promotional purposes without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. By claiming a prize, winners agree that R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, their affiliates, directors and judging organization shall have no liability for any injuries, losses or damages of any kind (including death) resulting from acceptance, possession, participation in or use of any prize.

8. For advance copies of Affidavit of Eligibility/Release of Liability/Publicity/Prize Acceptance Form or the names of prize winners (available after 8/1/99), send a separate, self-addressed stamped envelope to Camel's Mighty Tasty Lifestyles Winners List, P.O. Box 5694, Norwood, MN 55583-5780. Indicate "Affidavit" or "Winners List" as applicable on the outside of envelope.

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Legal Mumbo Jumbo!

"WE'RE COMING FULL CIRCLE," says Paul Patterson, a professor of agricultural economics. "One day you may find two classes of people in rural Idaho: the people who run the farms and the people who own them."



In the past twenty-five years, Idaho has lost half of its potato farmers. In the same period, state land devoted to potatoes has increased by one-third. Family farms are giving way to corporate farms. Patterns of land ownership in the West may soon resemble those of rural England.

tures and distributes fertilizer; mines phosphate and silica; and produces oil, ethanol and natural gas. In 1980, Simplot provided $1 million in start-up funds to a couple of engineers working in the basement of a dentist's office in Boise, Idaho. Fifteen years later, that investment in Micron Electronics – a manufacturer of computer memory chips – was worth about $4 billion. Simplot is also one of the nation's biggest landowners. "I've been a land hog all my life," Simplot told me, laughing. While still in his teens, he bought 18,000 acres along the Snake River in Idaho. He now owns 85,000 acres of irrigated farmland, more than twice that amount of ranch land and much of downtown Boise. His ZX Ranch in southern Oregon is the largest cattle ranch in the United States, measuring 65 miles wide and 163 miles long.

Though he is a multibillionaire, J.R. Simplot has few pretensions. He wears cowboy boots and bluejeans, holds business meetings at Elmer's Pancake House in Boise and drives his own car, a Lincoln Continental with license plates that say MR. SPUD. He seems to have little patience for abstractions, describing his empire with a mixture of pride and awe: "It's big, and it's real – it ain't bullshit." Bad hips forced him to give up jogging at the age of seventy-five, and a bad fall made him give up horseback riding five years later. Nevertheless, at eighty-nine, J.R. Simplot still skis. He stepped down as the chief executive of his company in 1994, but he keeps buying more land and more livestock. "Hell, I'm just an old farmer got some luck," Simplot said when I asked him about the key to his success. "The only thing I did smart, remember this – ninety-nine percent of people would have sold out when they got their first 25 or 30 million. I didn't sell out. I just hung on. . . ."

IN RECENT YEARS, THE PRODUCTION OF FROZEN french fries has become an intensely competitive business. Although the J.R. Simplot Co. supplies about half of the french fries that McDonald's sells in the United States, two other fry companies are now larger: Lamb Weston, the nation's leading producer of fries, and McCain, a Canadian firm that became the second-largest fry company after buying Ore-Ida last year. Simplot, Lamb Weston and McCain now control about eighty percent of the American market for frozen french fries, having eliminated or acquired most of their smaller rivals. The three french-fry giants compete for valuable contracts to supply the fast-food chains. Frozen french fries have become a bulk commodity, manufactured in high volumes at a low profit margin. Price differences of just a few pennies a pound can mean the difference between winning or losing a major contract. All of this has greatly benefited the fast-food chains, lowering their wholesale costs and making their retail sales of french fries ever more profitable. The fast-food companies purchase frozen fries for about thirty cents a pound, reheat them in oil and then sell them for about six dollars a pound.

During the 1960s, Idaho's potato output surpassed that of Maine, the previous leader, due to the rise of the french-fry industry and the productivity gains made by Idaho farmers. Since 1980, the tonnage of potatoes grown in Idaho has almost doubled, while the average yield per acre has risen by thirty percent. But the extraordinary profits being made through the sale of french fries have hardly trickled down to the farmers. Paul Patterson, an extension professor of agricultural economics at the University of Idaho, describes the current market for potatoes as an "oligopsony" – a market in which a small number of buyers exert power over a large number of sellers. The giant processing companies do their best to drive down the prices offered to potato farmers. The increased productivity of Idaho farmers has lowered prices even further, shifting more of the profits to the processors and the fast-food chains. Out of every $1.50 spent on a large order of fries at a fast-food restaurant, perhaps two cents goes to the farmer who grew the potatoes.

In the past twenty-five years, Idaho has lost half of its potato farmers. During the same period, the amount of Idaho land devoted to potatoes has increased by one-third. Family farms are giving way to corporate farms that stretch for thousands of acres. These immense corporate farms are divided into smaller holdings for administrative purposes, and farmers who have been driven off the land are often hired to manage them. The patterns of land ownership in the American West are beginning to resemble those of rural England. "We're coming full circle," says Patterson. "One day you may find two classes of people in rural Idaho: the people who run the farms and the people who own them."



At a potato-processing plant in Idaho, mountains of potatoes are dispersed down long conveyor belts every day. In the course of a potato's journey through the plant, it will be analyzed for sugar content, starch content and color. The goal is to maintain a uniform appearance.

Long regarded as the aristocrats of rural Idaho, potato farmers remain stubbornly independent and unwilling to join forces. "Some of them are independent to the point of poverty," says Bert Moulton, a staff member at the Potato Growers of Idaho. The multinational food companies operate french-fry plants in a number of different regions, constantly shifting production to take advantage of the lowest potato prices, pitting one group of farmers against another. The economic fortunes of individual farmers and local communities matter little in the grand scheme. Today there are only 1,200 independent potato farmers left in Idaho – few enough to fit in a high school auditorium. The PGI recently tried to organize potato farmers into a cooperative, hoping to gain them more bargaining power. The effort was undermined by the big processors, who signed long-term deals with a handful of growers. The "joint ventures" being offered by french-fry companies provide farmers with the potato seed and financing for their crop, an arrangement that should dispel any illusions about their independence. "If potato farmers don't band together," Moulton warns, "they'll wind up sharecroppers."

At the peak of the fall harvest, I visited the Lamb Weston plant in American Falls, Idaho. It's one of the biggest fry factories in the nation and produces french fries for McDonald's. It has a production capacity nearly six times larger than that of the Simplot plant in Aberdeen. Lamb Weston was founded in 1950 by F. Gilbert Lamb, the inventor of a crucial piece of french-fry-making technology. The Lamb Water Gun Knife uses a high-pressure system to shoot potatoes at a speed of 117 feet per second through a grid of sharpened steel blades, thereby creating perfectly sliced french fries. After coming up with the idea, Gilbert Lamb tested the first Water Gun Knife in a company parking lot, shooting potatoes out of a fire hose. The company was bought by ConAgra in 1986. Lamb Weston now manufactures more than 130 different types of french fries, including Steak House Fries, CrissCut Fries, Hi-Fries, Mor-Fries, Burger Fries, Taterboy Crispy QQQ Fries, TaterBabies, Mini Bakers, MunchSkins, Twister Fries, Rus-ettes and Special Dry Fry Shoestrings.

Bud Mandeville, the production manager, led me up a narrow wooden staircase inside one of the plant's storage buildings. On the top floor, the staircase led to a catwalk, and beneath my feet I saw a mound of potatoes that was twenty feet deep, a hundred feet wide, and almost as long as two football fields. The building was kept at forty-six degrees year-round. In the dim light, the potatoes looked like grains of sand on a beach. This was one of seven storage buildings on the property.

Outside, tractor-trailers arrived from the fields, carrying potatoes that had just been harvested. The trucks dumped their loads onto spinning rods that brought the larger potatoes into the building and let the small potatoes, dirt and rocks fall to the ground. The rods led to a rock trap, a tank of water in which the potatoes floated and the rocks sank to the bottom. The plant used water systems to float potatoes gently this way and that way, guiding different sizes out of different holding bays, then flushing them into a three-foot-deep stream that ran beneath the cement floor. The interior of the processing plant was gray, massive and well-lighted, with huge pipes running along walls, steel catwalks, workers in hard hats and plenty of loud machinery. If there weren't potatoes bobbing and floating past, you might think the place was an oil refinery.

DEAN CONGER/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY IMAGE COLLECTION (LEFT); MARTIN ROGERS-WOODFIN CAMP

WHEN A FRENCH FRY with a blemish was detected, a machine knocked it off the production line and it was carried by conveyor belt to tiny automated knives that removed the blemish. Then the fry was returned to the line.



Instead of shipping full sides of beef, most slaughterhouses now package "fabricated" carcasses into smaller cuts within the plant and sell them as "boxed beef." The shelves of a Los Angeles beef-processing plant are lined with boxes ready for shipment.

Conveyor belts took the wet, clean potatoes into a machine that blasted them with steam for twelve seconds, boiled the water under their skins and exploded the skins off. Then the potatoes were pumped into a preheat tank and shot through a Lamb Water Gun Knife. They emerged as shoestring fries. Four video cameras scrutinized them from different angles, looking for flaws. When a french fry with a blemish was detected, an optical sorting machine time-sequenced a single burst of compressed air that knocked the bad fry off the production line and onto a separate conveyor belt, which carried it to a machine with tiny automated knives that precisely removed the blemish. And then the fry was returned to the main production line.

Sprays of hot water blanched the fries, gusts of hot air dried them, and 25,000 pounds of boiling oil fried them to a slight crisp. Air cooled by compressed ammonia gas quickly froze them, a computerized sorter divided them into six-pound batches, and a device that spun like an out-of-control Lazy Susan used centrifugal force to align the french fries so that they all pointed in the same direction. The fries were sealed in brown bags, then the bags were loaded by robots into cardboard boxes, and the boxes were stacked by robots onto wooden pallets. Forklifts driven by human beings took the pallets to a freezer for storage. Inside that freezer I saw 20 million pounds of french fries, most of them destined for McDonald's, the boxes of fries stacked thirty feet high, the stacks extending for roughly forty yards. And the freezer was half empty. Every day about a dozen railway cars and about two dozen tractor-trailers pulled up to the freezer, loaded up with french fries and departed for McDonald's restaurants all over the West.

Near the freezer was a laboratory where men and women in white coats analyzed french fries day and night, measuring their sugar content, their starch content, their color. During the fall, Lamb Weston adds sugar to the fries; in the spring, it leaches sugar out of them; the goal is to maintain a uniform appearance throughout the year. Every half hour, a new batch of fries was cooked in fryers identical to those installed in fast-food kitchens. A middle-aged woman in a lab coat handed me a paper plate full of premium extra longs, the type of french fries sold at McDonald's, and a salt shaker and some ketchup. The fries on the plate looked so familiar yet wildly out of place in this laboratory setting, this food factory with its computer screens, digital readouts, shiny steel platforms and evacuation plans in case of ammonia-gas leaks. Despite all that, the french fries were delicious – crisp and golden brown, made from potatoes that had been in the ground that morning.

I finished them and asked for some more.

WHERE THE BEEF HAS BEEN

YOU CAN SMELL GREELEY, Colorado, long before you can see it. The smell is hard to forget but not easy to describe, a combination of live animals, manure and dead animals being rendered into dog food. The smell is worst during the summer months, hanging heavy in the warm air, almost assuming a physical presence, blanketing Greeley day and night. Some people who live there no longer notice the smell; it recedes into the background, present but not present, like the sound of traffic for most New Yorkers. Others can't stop thinking about the smell, even after years; it permeates everything, sickens them, interferes with their sleep. Greeley is a factory town, one where cattle are the units of production.

Monfort Inc., "The Complete Meat Company," runs a beef slaughterhouse, a sheep slaughterhouse and processing plants a few miles north of Greeley. To supply the beef slaughterhouse, Monfort operates two of the nation's largest feedlots, which together hold up to 200,000 head of cattle. One of the feedlots stretches for almost two miles along Highway 35. At times, the animals are crowded so closely together that it looks like a Woodstock Festival for cattle, a moving mass of animals that goes on for acres. At feeding time, the cattle don't eat blue grama and buffalo grass off the prairie; during the three months before slaughter, they eat surplus grain dumped into long concrete troughs that resemble highway dividers. The grain fattens the cattle more rapidly than grass would. Almost two-thirds of the grain produced in the U.S. is now used to feed livestock, mainly cattle.

A typical steer will consume about two tons of grain during its stay at a feedlot, just to gain 400 pounds in weight. The process involves a fair amount of waste. Each steer deposits about fifty pounds of manure every day. The two feedlots outside Greeley produced more excrement last year than the populations of Denver, Boston, Atlanta and St. Louis – combined.

More than ninety percent of American cattle were grass-fed, not grain-fed, until the years after World War II. They roamed the range, eating native grasses, or lived on farms and ate hay. Warren Monfort, who owned a farm north of Greeley, became one of the nation's first large-scale cattle feeders, buying cheap corn, sugar beets and alfalfa from local farmers during the Depression. Monfort's feedlot business expanded after the war. By feeding cattle year-round, he could control the timing of his livestock sales and wait for the best prices at the Chicago stockyards. The meat of grain-fed beef was fatty and tender. Unlike grass-fed beef, it did not need to be aged for a few weeks; it could be eaten within days of the slaughter. Feedlots sprang up throughout the Midwest during the 1970s. The huge American grain surpluses, largely caused by govern-



The fabricating room ("fab" room) of a slaughterhouse, like the one in this Los Angeles beef-processing plant, is kept at forty degrees. Workers are furiously cutting the meat into small pieces; many of them are sweating, even though it's freezing cold.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN WINTERS

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Drug holidays:
One vacation you don't want to take

It sounds so good

Give your body a rest, a chance to recover from all those tough meds and their side effects. Just skip a dose, or a day, or a weekend...

The truth?

You're doing the virus a big favor. Suddenly, without your HIV drugs, there's nothing to stop the virus from making billions of copies of itself. And each and every new copy gives HIV a chance to change, to find a new form that could be resistant to the drugs you're taking.

In other words, when you go back to your regular medication schedule, there's a chance the drugs may no longer work as well.

HIV drugs should be taken on time, every day. That's the only way known to keep enough of each drug in your blood at all times to fight HIV.

The bottom line:

Why help the virus hurt you? Next time you're tempted to skip a dose or two, think again...or else a "minor" drug holiday could end up being a serious threat to your health. Don't let your vacation put HIV back to work.

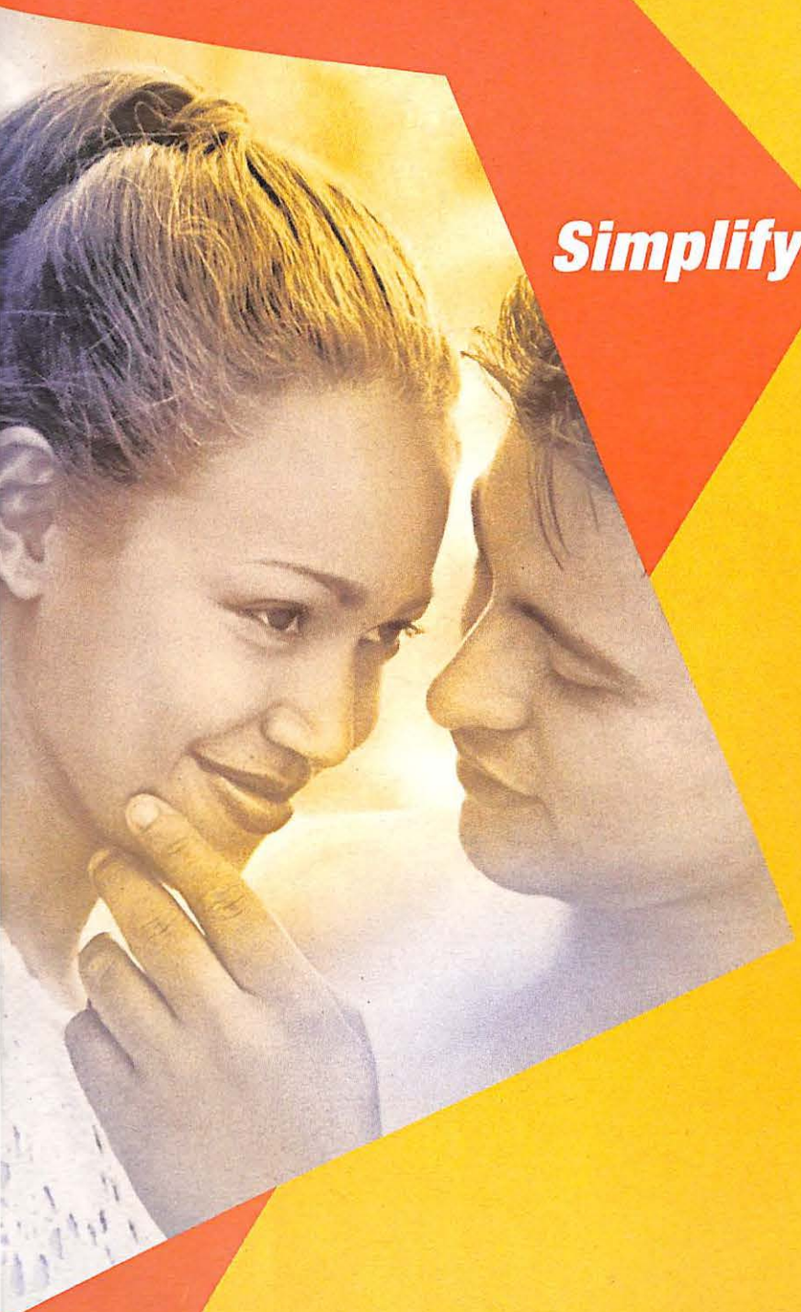
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- *Two proven HIV therapies are in one tablet*
- *One Combivir Tablet morning and night, with or without food*
- *Helps you live a longer, healthier life*[1,2]

The safety profile of Combivir should be the same as that of Epivir® (lamivudine; 3TC®) + Retrovir® (zidovudine; AZT). The most frequent side effects associated with Epivir + Retrovir taken together are headache, upset stomach, malaise or fatigue, and runny nose. A buildup of lactic acid and an enlarged liver, including fatal cases, have been reported rarely with some HIV drugs, including AZT and 3TC.

Ask your doctor about

Combivir®

lamivudine 150 mg/zidovudine 300 mg

ONE TABLET TWICE A DAY

Smarter Together

Call 1•888•TREAT HIV ext. 315 for more information or see www.treathiv.com

References: 1. CAESAR Coordinating Committee. Randomised trial of addition of lamivudine or lamivudine plus loviride to zidovudine-containing regimens for patients with HIV-1 infection: the CAESAR trial. *Lancet.* 1997; 349:1413-1421. **2.** Hammer SM, Squires KE, Hughes MD, et al. A controlled trial of two nucleoside analogues plus indinavir in persons with human immunodeficiency virus infection and CD4 cell counts of 200 per cubic millimeter or less. *N Engl J Med.* 1997;337:725-733.

Please see brief summary for Combivir on adjacent page.

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Glaxo Wellcome HIV
A division of Glaxo Wellcome Inc.
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
Web site: www.glaxowellcome.com

BRIEF SUMMARY

COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets)

The following is a brief summary only; see full prescribing information for complete product information.

WARNING: ZIDOVUDINE, ONE OF THE TWO ACTIVE INGREDIENTS IN COMBIVIR, HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH HEMATOLOGIC TOXICITY INCLUDING NEUTROPENIA AND SEVERE ANEMIA, PARTICULARLY IN PATIENTS WITH ADVANCED HIV DISEASE (SEE WARNINGS). PROLONGED USE OF ZIDOVUDINE HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH SYMPTOMATIC MYOPATHY.

LACTIC ACIDOSIS AND SEVERE HEPATOMEGALY WITH STEATOSIS, INCLUDING FATAL CASES, HAVE BEEN REPORTED WITH THE USE OF ANTIRETROVIRAL NUCLEOSIDE ANALOGUES ALONE OR IN COMBINATION, INCLUDING ZIDOVUDINE AND LAMIVUDINE (SEE WARNINGS).

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: COMBIVIR is indicated for the treatment of HIV infection.

Description of Clinical Studies: ***COMBIVIR:*** There have been no clinical trials conducted with COMBIVIR. See CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY for information about bioequivalence. One COMBIVIR Tablet given twice a day is an alternative regimen to EPIVIR Tablets 150 mg twice a day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day in divided doses.

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine: The NUCB3007 (CAESAR) study was conducted using EPIVIR 150-mg Tablets (150 mg b.i.d.) and RETROVIR 100-mg Capsules (2 x 100 mg t.i.d.). CAESAR was a multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled study comparing continued current therapy (zidovudine alone (62% of patients) or zidovudine with didanosine or zalcitabine (38% of patients)) to the addition of EPIVIR or EPIVIR plus an investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor, randomized 1:2:1. A total of 1816 HIV-infected adults with 25 to 250 (median 122) CD4 cells/mm³ at baseline were enrolled; median age was 36 years, 87% were male, 84% were nucleoside-experienced, and 16% were therapy-naive. The median duration on study was 12 months. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Patients (%) With At Least One HIV Disease-Progression Event or Death

Endpoint	Current Therapy (n = 460)	EPIVIR plus Current Therapy (n = 896)	EPIVIR plus a NNRTI* plus Current Therapy (n = 460)
HIV progression or death	90 (19.6%)	86 (9.6%)	41 (8.9%)
Death	27 (5.9%)	23 (2.6%)	14 (3.0%)

*An investigational non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor not approved in the United States.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: COMBIVIR Tablets are contraindicated in patients with previously demonstrated clinically significant hypersensitivity to any of the components of the product.

WARNINGS: COMBIVIR is a fixed-dose combination of lamivudine and zidovudine. Ordinarily, COMBIVIR should not be administered concomitantly with either lamivudine or zidovudine.

The complete prescribing information for all agents being considered for use with COMBIVIR should be consulted before combination therapy with COMBIVIR is initiated.

Bone Marrow Suppression: COMBIVIR should be used with caution in patients who have bone marrow compromise evidenced by granulocyte count <1000 cells/mm³ or hemoglobin <9.5 g/dL (see ADVERSE REACTIONS).

Frequent blood counts are strongly recommended in patients with advanced HIV disease who are treated with COMBIVIR. For HIV-infected individuals and patients with asymptomatic or early HIV disease, periodic blood counts are recommended.

Lactic Acidosis/Severe Hepatomegaly with Steatosis: Lactic acidosis and severe hepatomegaly with steatosis, including fatal cases, have been reported with the use of antiretroviral nucleoside analogues alone or in combination, including zidovudine and lamivudine. A majority of these cases have been in women. Caution should be exercised when administering COMBIVIR to any patient, and particularly to those with known risk factors for liver disease. Treatment with COMBIVIR should be suspended in any patient who develops clinical or laboratory findings suggestive of lactic acidosis or hepatotoxicity.

Myopathy: Myopathy and myositis, with pathological changes similar to that produced by HIV disease, have been associated with prolonged use of zidovudine, and therefore may occur with therapy with COMBIVIR.

PRECAUTIONS:

General: Reduction of doses of lamivudine is recommended for patients with low body weight (less than 50 kg or 110 lb); therefore patients with low body weight should not receive COMBIVIR.

Patients With HIV and Hepatitis B Virus Coinfection: In clinical trials and postmarketing experience, some patients with HIV infection who have chronic liver disease due to hepatitis B virus infection experienced clinical or laboratory evidence of recurrent hepatitis upon discontinuation of lamivudine. Consequences may be more severe in patients with decompensated liver disease.

Patients With Impaired Renal Function: Reduction of the dosages of lamivudine and zidovudine is recommended for patients with impaired renal function. Patients with creatinine clearance ≤50 mL/min should not receive COMBIVIR.

Information for Patients: COMBIVIR is not a cure for HIV infection and patients may continue to experience illnesses associated with HIV infection, including opportunistic infections. Patients should be advised that the use of COMBIVIR has not been shown to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination. Patients should be informed that the major toxicities of COMBIVIR are neutropenia and/or anemia. They should be told of the extreme importance of having their blood counts followed closely while on therapy, especially for patients with advanced HIV disease. Patients should be advised of the importance of taking COMBIVIR as it is prescribed.

Drug Interactions: Coadministration of ganciclovir, interferon-alpha, and other bone marrow suppressive or cytotoxic agents may increase the hematologic toxicity of zidovudine (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY section of full prescribing information).

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, and Impairment of Fertility: ***Carcinogenicity:***

Lamivudine: Lamivudine long-term carcinogenicity studies in mice and rats showed no evidence of carcinogenic potential at exposures up to 10 times (mice) and 58 times (rats) those observed in humans at the recommended therapeutic dose.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was administered orally at three dosage levels to separate groups of mice and rats (60 females and 60 males in each group). Initial single daily doses were 30, 60, and 120 mg/kg per day in mice and 80, 220, and 600 mg/kg per day in rats. The doses in mice were reduced to 20, 30, and 40 mg/kg per day after day 90 because of treatment-related anemia, whereas in rats only the high dose was reduced to 450 mg/kg per day on day 91 and then to 300 mg/kg per day on day 279.

In mice, seven late-appearing (after 19 months) vaginal neoplasms (five nonmetastasizing squamous cell carcinomas, one squamous cell papilloma, and one squamous polyp) occurred in animals given the highest dose. One late-appearing squamous cell papilloma occurred in the vagina of a middle-dose animal. No vaginal tumors were found at the lowest dose.

In rats, two late-appearing (after 20 months), nonmetastasizing vaginal squamous cell carcinomas occurred in animals given the highest dose. No vaginal tumors occurred at the low or middle dose in rats. No other drug-related tumors were observed in either sex of either species.

At doses that produced tumors in mice and rats, the estimated drug exposure (as measured by AUC) was approximately three times (mouse) and 24 times (rat) the estimated human exposure at the recommended therapeutic dose of 100 mg every 4 hours.

Two transplacental carcinogenicity studies were conducted in mice. One study administered zidovudine at doses of 20 mg/kg per day or 40 mg/kg per day from gestation day 10 through parturition and lactation with dosing continuing in offspring for 24 months postnatally. The doses of zidovudine employed in this study produced zidovudine exposures approximately three times the estimated human exposure at recommended doses. After 24 months, at the highest dose, an increase in incidence of vaginal tumors was noted with no increase in tumors in the liver or lung or any other organ in either gender. These findings are consistent with results of the standard oral carcinogenicity study in mice, as described earlier. A second study administered zidovudine at maximum tolerated doses of 12.5 mg/day or 25 mg/day (~1000 mg/kg nonpregnant body weight or ~450 mg/kg of term body weight) to pregnant mice from days 12 through 18 of gestation. There was an increase in the number of tumors in the lung, liver, and female reproductive tracts in the offspring of mice receiving the higher dose level of zidovudine.

It is not known how predictive the results of rodent carcinogenicity studies may be for humans.

Mutagenicity: Lamivudine: Lamivudine was negative in a microbial mutagenicity screen, in an in vitro cell transformation assay, in a rat micronucleus test, in a rat bone marrow cytogenetic assay, and in an assay for unscheduled DNA synthesis in rat liver. It was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK$^{+/-}$ mouse lymphoma assay and clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine was mutagenic in a L5178Y/TK$^{+/-}$ mouse lymphoma assay, positive in an in vitro cell transformation assay, clastogenic in a cytogenetic assay using cultured human lymphocytes, and positive in mouse and rat micronucleus tests after repeated doses. It was negative in a cytogenetic study in rats given a single dose.

Impairment of Fertility: Lamivudine: In a study of reproductive performance, lamivudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, revealed no evidence of impaired fertility (judged by conception rates) and no effect on the survival, growth, and development to weaning of the offspring.

Zidovudine: Zidovudine, administered to male and female rats at doses up to 7 times the usual adult dose based on body surface area considerations, had no effect on fertility judged by conception rates.

Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category C.

COMBIVIR: There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of COMBIVIR in pregnant women. Reproduction studies with lamivudine and zidovudine have been performed in animals (see Lamivudine and Zidovudine sections below). COMBIVIR should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefits outweigh the risks.

Lamivudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered lamivudine have been performed in rats and rabbits at 130 and 60 times, respectively, the usual adult dose (based on relative body surface area) and have revealed no evidence of teratogenicity. Some evidence of early embryolethality was seen in the rabbit at doses similar to those produced by the usual adult dose and higher, but there was no indication of this effect in the rat at orally administered doses up to 130 times the usual adult dose. Studies in pregnant rats and rabbits showed that lamivudine is transferred to the fetus through the placenta.

Zidovudine: Reproduction studies with orally administered zidovudine in the rat and in the rabbit at doses up to 500 mg/kg per day revealed no evidence of teratogenicity with zidovudine. Zidovudine treatment resulted in embryo/fetal toxicity as evidenced by an increase in the incidence of fetal resorptions in rats given 150 or 450 mg/kg per day and rabbits given 500 mg/kg per day. The doses used in the teratology studies resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations (after one-half of the daily dose) in rats 66 to 226 times, and in rabbits 12 to 87 times, mean steady-state peak human plasma concentrations (after one-sixth of the daily dose) achieved with the recommended daily dose (100 mg every 4 hours). In an additional teratology study in rats, a dose of 3000 mg/kg per day (very near the oral median lethal dose in rats of 3683 mg/kg) caused marked maternal toxicity and an increase in the incidence of fetal malformations. This dose resulted in peak zidovudine plasma concentrations 350 times peak human plasma concentrations. No evidence of teratogenicity was seen in this experiment at doses of 600 mg/kg per day or less. Two rodent carcinogenicity studies were conducted (see Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility).

Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry: To monitor maternal-fetal outcomes of pregnant women exposed to COMBIVIR® Tablets (lamivudine/zidovudine tablets) and other antiretroviral agents, an Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry has been established. Physicians are encouraged to register patients by calling 1-800-258-4263.

Nursing Mothers: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that HIV-infected mothers not breastfeed their infants to avoid risking postnatal transmission of HIV infection.

COMBIVIR: Zidovudine is excreted in breast milk (see CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics: Nursing Mothers subsection of full prescribing information); however, no data are available on COMBIVIR or lamivudine. Therefore, there is a potential for adverse effects in nursing infants. **Mothers should be instructed not to breastfeed if they are receiving COMBIVIR.**

Pediatric Use: COMBIVIR should not be administered to pediatric patients less than 12 years of age because it is a fixed-dose combination that cannot be adjusted for this patient population.

ADVERSE REACTIONS:

Lamivudine Plus Zidovudine Administered As Separate Formulations: In four randomized, controlled trials of EPIVIR 300 mg per day plus RETROVIR 600 mg per day, the following selected clinical and laboratory adverse events were observed (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Selected Clinical Adverse Events (≥5% Frequency) in Four Controlled Clinical Trials With EPIVIR 300 mg/day and RETROVIR 600 mg/day

Adverse Event		EPIVIR plus RETROVIR (n = 251)
Body as a whole	Headache	35%
	Malaise & fatigue	27%
	Fever or chills	10%
Digestive	Nausea	33%
	Diarrhea	18%
	Nausea & vomiting	13%
	Anorexia and/or decreased appetite	10%
	Abdominal pain	9%
	Abdominal cramps	6%
	Dyspepsia	5%
Nervous system	Neuropathy	12%
	Insomnia & other sleep disorders	11%
	Dizziness	10%
	Depressive disorders	9%
Respiratory	Nasal signs & symptoms	20%
	Cough	18%
Skin	Skin rashes	9%
Musculoskeletal	Musculoskeletal pain	12%
	Myalgia	8%
	Arthralgia	5%

Pancreatitis was observed in three of the 656 adult patients (<0.5%) who received EPIVIR in controlled clinical trials. Selected laboratory abnormalities observed during therapy are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequencies of Selected Laboratory Abnormalities Among Adults in Four Controlled Clinical Trials of EPIVIR 300 mg/day plus RETROVIR 600 mg/day*

Test (Abnormal Level)	EPIVIR plus RETROVIR % (n)
Neutropenia (ANC<750/mm³)	7.2% (237)
Anemia (Hgb<8.0 g/dL)	2.9% (241)
Thrombocytopenia (platelets<50,000/mm³)	0.4% (240)
ALT (>5.0 x ULN)	3.7% (241)
AST (>5.0 x ULN)	1.7% (241)
Bilirubin (>2.5 x ULN)	0.8% (241)
Amylase (>2.0 x ULN)	4.2% (72)

ULN = Upper limit of normal.
ANC = Absolute neutrophil count.
n = Number of patients assessed.
*Frequencies of these laboratory abnormalities were higher in patients with mild laboratory abnormalities at baseline.

Observed During Clinical Practice: In addition to adverse events reported from clinical trials, the following events have been identified during post-approval use of EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR. Because they are reported voluntarily from a population of unknown size, estimates of frequency cannot be made. These events have been chosen for inclusion due to a combination of their seriousness, frequency of reporting, or potential causal connection to EPIVIR and/or RETROVIR.

Endocrine and Metabolic: Hyperglycemia.
General: Sensitization reactions (including anaphylaxis), vasculitis.
Hepatobiliary Tract and Pancreas: Lactic acidosis and hepatic steatosis (see WARNINGS), pancreatitis.
Musculoskeletal: Muscle weakness with CPK elevation, rhabdomyolysis.
Nervous: Seizures.
Skin: Alopecia, erythema multiforme, Stevens-Johnson syndrome, urticaria.

OVERDOSAGE:

COMBIVIR: There is no known antidote for COMBIVIR.

Lamivudine: One case of an adult ingesting 6 grams of lamivudine was reported; there were no clinical signs or symptoms noted and hematologic tests remained normal. It is not known whether lamivudine can be removed by peritoneal dialysis or hemodialysis.

Zidovudine: Acute overdoses of zidovudine have been reported in pediatric patients and adults. These involved exposures up to 50 grams. The only consistent findings were nausea and vomiting. Other reported occurrences included headache, dizziness, drowsiness, lethargy, confusion, and one report of a grand mal seizure. Hematologic changes were transient. All patients recovered. Hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis appear to have a negligible effect on the removal of zidovudine while elimination of its primary metabolite, GZDV, is enhanced.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: The recommended oral dose of COMBIVIR for adults and adolescents (at least 12 years of age) is one tablet (containing 150 mg of lamivudine and 300 mg of zidovudine) twice daily.

Dose Adjustment: Because it is a fixed-dose combination, COMBIVIR should not be prescribed for patients requiring dosage adjustment such as those with reduced renal function (creatinine clearance ≤50 mL/min), those with low body weight (<50 kg or 110 lb), or those experiencing dose-limiting adverse events.

US Patent Nos. 5,047,407; 4,818,538; 4,828,838; 4,724,232; 4,833,130; and 4,837,208

GlaxoWellcome
Glaxo Wellcome Inc.
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Lamivudine is manufactured under agreement from Biochem Pharma Inc.
Laval, Quebec, Canada

May 1998/RL-589

TWENTY YEARS AGO, the Monfort plant in Greeley, Colorado, slaughtered about 175 cattle an hour. By the early 1990s, the plant slaughtered as many as 400 an hour, about half a dozen animals every minute.

ment price supports, provided cheap food for livestock and made cattle feeding a standard practice in the nation's beef industry. The annual capacity of Warren Monfort's feedlots in the 1950s was about 20,000 head of cattle. The three Colorado feedlots operated by Monfort Inc. now fatten almost a million cattle a year.

A generation ago, meatpacking plants were located in cities across the United States. The plants were staffed by skilled union workers. Meatpacking was a difficult job but a highly paid and desirable one. It provided a stable middle-class income – a career. Live cattle were shipped from the high plains to urban packing houses, where they were slaughtered, cut into sides of beef and then sold to wholesalers. Skilled, unionized butchers reduced the sides of beef to marketable cuts or ground them into hamburger meat. But in 1966, a new company, Iowa Beef Processors (later known as IBP), launched a new meatpacking system that soon made the traditional slaughterhouse obsolete. IBP opened slaughterhouses in the high plains, placing them near





At ConAgra's complex in Greeley, Colorado, up to 200,000 cattle are corralled into massive feedlots (above). The animals eat surplus grain from troughs resembling highway dividers. After three months they end up cut into pieces at the processing plant (right).

the feedlots. Instead of shipping full sides of beef, IBP "fabricated" carcasses into smaller cuts within the plant and sold them as "boxed beef." It changed production methods in order to take advantage of a deskilled work force – much like the fast-food chains – simplifying each job into a single task that could be performed again and again. And it waged a ruthless campaign against labor unions, an effort made easier by the placement of its slaughterhouses in rural states such as Iowa and Nebraska that were hostile to unions. In the mid-1970s, the average meatpacker's wage was about fifteen dollars an hour (in today's dollars). The workers at IBP plants were paid about half that amount.

As IBP opened a series of slaughterhouses in small rural towns, becoming the nation's largest beef-processing company, its competitors were forced to adopt the same system of production or risk going out of business. The Monfort family had established a slaughterhouse near its feedlots in Greeley during the early 1960s, later becoming one of the leading meatpackers in the industry. The workers at Monfort belonged to a union and earned good wages. There was a waiting list for jobs at the plant. But the changes in the meatpacking industry soon reached Colorado. In 1980, Monfort shut down its slaughterhouse in Greeley and fired all the workers. When the beef plant reopened two years later, union members were not rehired and wages were cut by forty percent.

The same production system that enabled meatpacking companies to get rid of their union workers allowed supermarket chains and wholesalers to fire their skilled, highly paid butchers. More and more beef processing took place within slaughterhouses. Grinders were installed to make hamburger meat. And the growing purchasing power of the supermarket chains and the fast-food chains encouraged concentration in the meatpacking industry. In 1968, McDonald's bought ground beef from 175 local suppliers around the country; a few years later, seeking to achieve uniformity as it expanded, McDonald's reduced the number of its beef suppliers to five. Rival meatpackers joined forces to cut costs and wipe out their competition. In 1918, the five largest meatpackers controlled fifty-five percent of the American market. President Woodrow Wilson's administration curtailed the power of these companies, known as the Beef Trust, using a consent decree. In 1977, the four largest meatpacking companies controlled only twenty-five percent of the market. By the end of the 1980s, however, three multinational corporations controlled more than seventy percent of the beef slaughter in the United States – the greatest degree of market concentration in the beef industry since record-keeping began in the late nineteenth century. The Justice Department during the Reagan administration did not oppose the disappearance of hundreds of small meatpacking firms. On the contrary, the Justice Department opposed using antitrust laws to stop the giant meatpackers.

In 1983, Monfort sued Excel – the nation's second-largest beef processor, owned by Cargill – to prevent it from acquiring Spencer Beef, the nation's third-largest beef processor. Lawyers for Monfort argued that the acquisition would allow Excel to engage in predatory pricing and to reduce competition. A panel of federal judges ruled in favor of Monfort, but Excel appealed their decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. Reagan's Justice Department submitted a brief in the case, arguing on behalf of Excel, claiming it had every right to buy a rival company. In 1986, the Supreme Court approved the merger of America's second- and third-largest meatpacking companies. The following year, Monfort gave up its independence and agreed to a takeover by the ConAgra Corp. "It seemed to me that if the industry was going to be concentrated," Ken Monfort said, explaining the sale of the company founded by his father, "there should be at least three large players instead of just two."

By purchasing Monfort, ConAgra became the largest meatpacker in the world. It is now the biggest food company in the United States. In addition to being the top producer of french fries, ConAgra is the largest manufacturer of frozen food, the largest sheep processor and turkey processor, the largest flour miller, the largest distributor of agricultural chemicals, the third-largest pork processor, as well as a leading chicken processor, seed producer, feed producer and commodity-futures trader. ConAgra sells its food under dozens of retail brand names, including Hunt's, Chun King, Swiss Miss, Orville Redenbacher's, Reddi-wip, Knott's Berry Farm and Healthy Choice. Twenty years ago, ConAgra – a combination of two Latin words whose intended meaning is "partnership with the land" – was an obscure Nebraska flour company with annual revenues



Javier Ramirez is president of the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 990, which represents employees at the Monfort beef plant in Greeley. Ramirez's greatest concern, he says, is the danger that slaughterhouse workers face every day: risks to their health and lives.

of less than $600 million. Last year, ConAgra's revenues were nearly $24 billion. The company's phenomenal growth in the 1980s was driven by a vow to increase its earnings per share by at least fourteen percent every year. Top managers who fail to reach their targeted profit levels are often fired. The workers at ConAgra plants are viewed as being equally expendable. In April 1996, ConAgra closed a meatpacking plant in Des Moines, terminating the employment of 1,322 workers with just a day's notice. ConAgra's president once sought changes in the Nebraska tax code by warning the state legislature, "Some Friday night we (may) turn out the lights, click, click, click . . . back up the trucks, and we'll be gone by Monday morning."

The unprecedented degree of concentration in the meatpacking industry has helped depress the prices that ranchers receive for their cattle. In the last two decades, the rancher's share of every retail dollar spent on beef has fallen from sixty-four cents to forty-nine cents. "If ConAgra's my only buyer," asked Dave Carter, head of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, "and on the day I need to be selling, they're not buying, what kind of a market is that?" A 1996 United States Department of Agriculture investigation of packer concentration found that many ranchers were afraid to testify against the meatpacking companies, fearing retaliation and "economic ruin." The four largest meatpackers now control perhaps twenty percent of the live cattle in the United States. When the price of cattle starts to rise, the meatpacking companies can flood the market with their own animals, driving the prices down. They can also obtain cattle through confidential agreements with large producers, never revealing the

ROB BUCHANAN

WHEN CONAGRA PURCHASED MONFORT, it became the largest meatpacker in the world. It sells its food under dozens of brand names, including Hunt's, Chun King, Swiss Miss, Reddi-wip and Healthy Choice.

true prices being paid. "A free market requires many buyers as well as many sellers, all with equal access to accurate information, all entitled to trade on the same terms and none with a big enough share of the market to influence price," a report by Nebraska's Center for Rural Affairs concluded. "Nothing close to those conditions now exists in the cattle market."

In *Meatpackers and Beef Barons,* sociologist Carol Andreas calls Greeley a "modern-day company town" and describes the changes in its work force during the 1980s. When Monfort reopened its beef plant there in 1982, after breaking the union, it began to hire recent immigrants – some of them illegal – from Mexico, Central America and Southeast Asia. Jobs that had once provided a solid middle-class life now trapped workers in rural poverty. Instead of a waiting list, the meatpacking plant soon had a turnover rate that approached 100 percent a year, as the company churned through its workers. Andreas suggests that the high turnover rate improved the company's bottom line. A worker needed six months to a year of employment at the plant to get health insurance, two years of employment to earn vacation pay. "There are some economies, frankly," one meat-industry executive admitted in 1984, "that result from hiring new employees." Monfort's influence extended throughout Weld County and the city of Greeley. The director for environmental protection of Weld County's Health Department later became the vice president of ConAgra Red Meats, taking charge of its environmental operations. The doctor at the Greeley Medical Clinic who evaluated the severity of many workplace injuries – Andreas calls him "the one doctor who was most despised by workers" – later became the corporate medical director for ConAgra Red Meats. And when workers at the Monfort Portion Foods plant went on strike in 1987, inmates at a local halfway house were hired to do those jobs.

In 1992, the National Labor Relations Board found that Monfort had committed "numerous, pervasive and outrageous" violations of labor laws, including "unlawful termination of union supporters, interrogations, threats of plant closings . . . unilateral changes in working conditions (and) threats of discharge." Employees who had been unfairly dismissed were awarded a $10 million settlement, and workers at the Monfort beef plant voted to join the United Food and Commercial Workers union. A list of the slaughterhouse job categories in the latest union contract evokes a world unfamiliar to most people, with a nomenclature all its own: knocker, sticker, shackler, rumper, tub dumper, knuckle dropper, splitter top/bottom butt, feed kill chain.



An infection by E. coli O157:H7 (above) can be caused by as few as ten microbes; salmonella requires thousands. E. coli microbes can survive on counter tops and in moist environments for weeks.

Today, Monfort is still the largest employer in Weld County, with about 4,000 workers at its feedlots, slaughterhouses and processing facilities. The majority of the workers at Monfort's beef plant cannot speak English. Most of them are Mexican immigrants who live in places like the River Park Mobile Court, a collection of battered old trailers just down the road from the slaughterhouse. The basic pay at the beef plant is now $9.20 an hour; health insurance is offered after six months; vacation pay after a year. Monfort refuses to disclose the current rate of turnover; a union official told me that roughly seventy percent of the workers quit or are fired every year. The high turnover rate at the slaughterhouse is made possible by the steady flow into Greeley of poor immigrants desperate for work.

Javier Ramirez is president of the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 990, which represents employees at the Monfort beef plant in Greeley. Ramirez is in his late twenties and knows a fair amount about beef. His father is a UFCW leader in Chicago. Ramirez grew up around slaughterhouses and watched the beef industry abandon his hometown for rural plants in Kansas, Nebraska, Texas and Colorado. The UFCW has given workers in Greeley the ability to challenge unfair dismissals and to file grievances against supervisors. The return of the union has led to pay raises and better working conditions. But the union's power has been limited by the high turnover rate among Monfort workers and the aging equipment at the beef plant. Demands for higher pay could prompt ConAgra to shut the plant down. Monfort has lately tried in good faith to screen out illegal immigrants and improve the safety record at the plant. Nevertheless, one of the most pressing issues for Javier Ramirez is the danger that slaughterhouse workers face every day: the risks to their health and their lives.

The injury rate among meatpackers is the highest of any occupation in the United States. Working in a slaughterhouse is three times more dangerous than working in an average American factory. Every year about one-third of all slaughterhouse workers – roughly 50,000 men and women – suffer an injury or an illness that requires first aid on the job. Aside from the automated production lines and a variety of power tools, most of the work in American slaughterhouses is still performed by hand. Poultry plants have been largely mechanized, thanks to the breeding of chickens that are uniform in size; but cattle come in all sizes and shapes, varying in weight by hundreds of pounds and preventing the mechanization of beef plants. A sharp knife is still the most important tool in a slaughterhouse. Lacerations are the most common injury suffered by meatpackers, who often stab themselves or someone working nearby. Tendinitis and Cumulative Trauma Disorders are also quite common. Many slaughterhouse workers make a knife cut every three seconds, which adds up to about 10,000 cuts during an eight-and-a-half-hour shift. If the knife is not sharpened regularly and grows dull, additional pressure is placed on a worker's tendons, joints and nerves. A large number of meatpackers develop shoulder problems, carpal tunnel syndrome and "trigger finger" (a disorder in which fingers become frozen in a curled position). The slippery floors in slaughterhouses, the carcasses rapidly swinging past, and the cutting tools and heavy machinery are responsible for back injuries, falls, broken bones, dismemberments and fatal accidents.



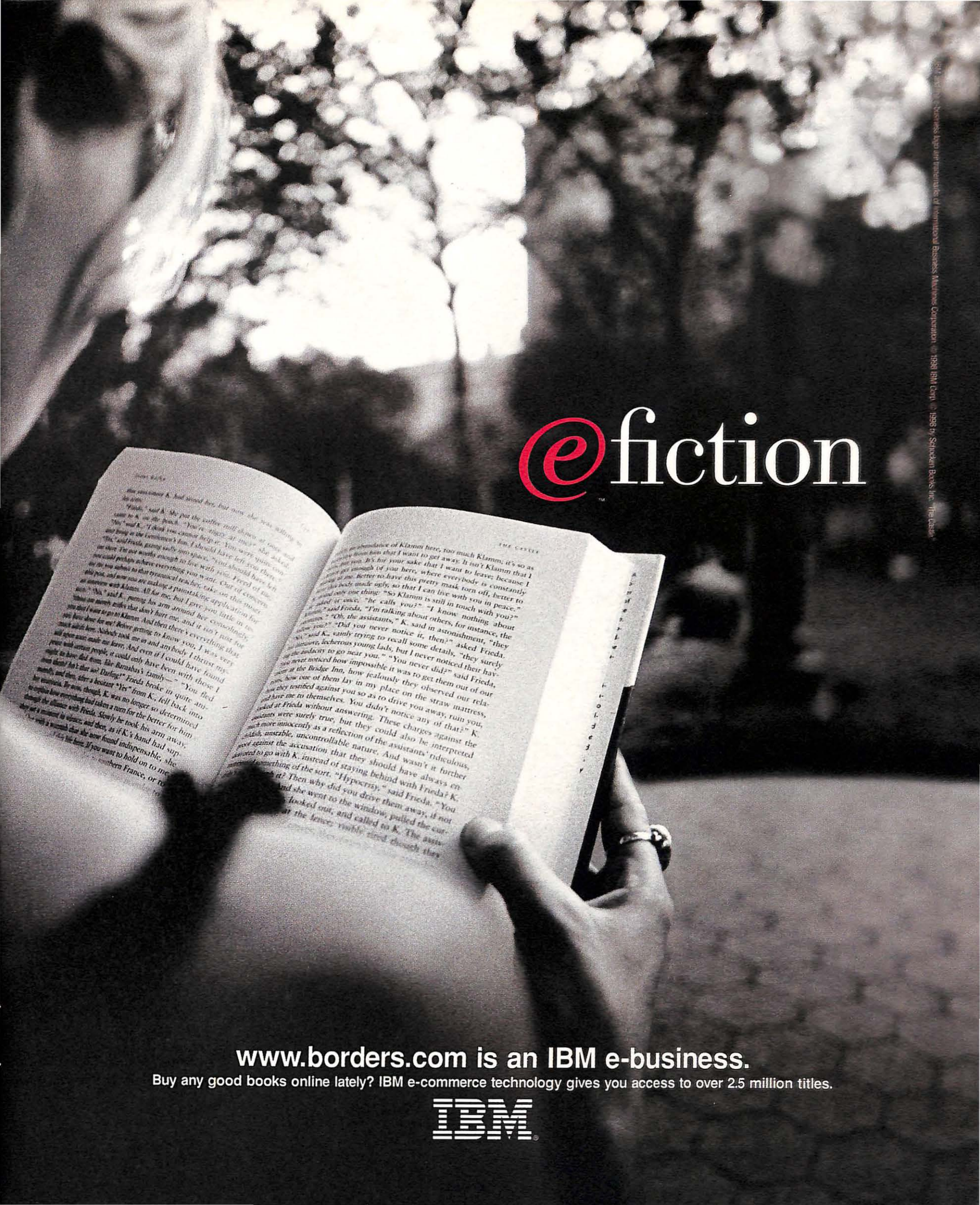
"The knives don't know any difference between cow meat and human meat": The average slaughterhouse worker wears about eight pounds of chain mail – designed to protect workers from cutting themselves and each other – on his hands, wrist, stomach and back. "Nobody helped train me," a worker says. "No training on the knife. So you see how the people on either side do the work, then you do it."

Perhaps the leading determinant of the injury rate at a slaughterhouse is the speed of the production line. Meatpackers often work within inches of each other, wielding large knives. As the pace increases, so does the risk of accidental cuts and stabbings. About seventy-five cattle an hour were slaughtered in the old meatpacking plants in Chicago. Twenty years ago, the Monfort plant in Greeley slaughtered about 175 cattle an hour. By the early 1990s, the Monfort plant slaughtered as many as 400 cattle an hour, about half a dozen animals every minute, sent down a single production line, carved by workers under tremendous pressure not to fall behind.

Beef slaughterhouses now operate at a low profit margin. The three giant meatpacking companies – Monfort, IBP and Excel – try to increase earnings by maximizing the volume of production at their plants. A faster pace means higher profits. Declining beef consumption in the United States has been prompted less

COURTESY OF THE CDC (LEFT)

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN WINTERS


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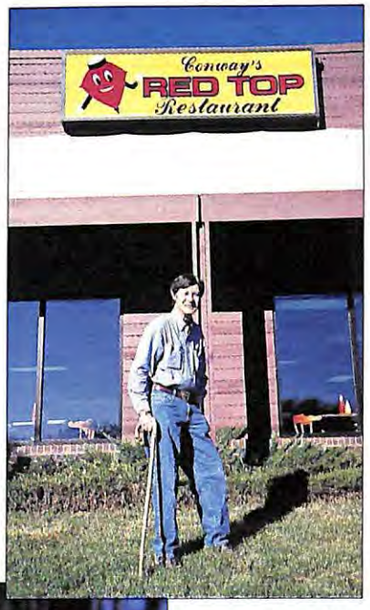
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A LIST OF THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE JOB CATEGORIES evokes a world unfamiliar to most people: knocker, sticker, shackler, rumper, tub dumper, knuckle dropper, splitter top/bottom butt, feed kill chain.

by health concerns than by the price of beef compared with the prices of other meats. The same factors that make beef slaughterhouses inefficient (the lack of mechanization, the reliance on human labor) also encourage companies to make them even more dangerous (by speeding up the pace).

The slaughterhouse workers I met in Greeley talked about the difficulties of their jobs, as well as a few of the rewards. Felipe (not his real name) was originally from Chihuahua, Mexico. He learned about job openings at the Monfort plant in the late 1980s from a friend who was already in the United States. Felipe crossed the border illegally, made it to Greeley, applied for a job at the plant and anxiously waited to see whether Monfort would hire him. For two weeks he lived outdoors in Greeley, sleeping under bridges and working at construction sites during the day. Monfort hired Felipe, not at all concerned about his lack of English, and asked whether he knew of other people back home who might want to work at the plant. His first day at the slaughterhouse was confusing. "Nobody helped train me – no training how to use the knife," Felipe said. "So you see how the people on either side of you do the work, and then you do it."







Conway's Red Top is bucking the industry trend: Owner Rich Conway (right) provides his employees with health insurance, and the Red Top burger (below), ranked among the best in the United States, is formed every day by hand. Norb and Urban Conway (far right) bought Red Top in 1962.

Jose (not his real name) had been employed at the slaughterhouse for more than ten years. During that time many workers had lost fingers, mainly while using power saws. One man lost an arm in the box-making machine. People get cut all the time, trying to keep up with the pace. "The knives don't know any difference between cow meat and human meat," he said. Jose hurt one hand while operating a machine and badly injured a shoulder during a fall. A company doctor told him the shoulder was just fine; six months later an orthopedist told him surgery was necessary; years later, the shoulder still bothers him sometimes. His toughest stretch at the slaughterhouse was working a double shift. Jose didn't want to do it but thought he'd be fired for refusing. And so he worked a double shift six days a week. He would put in seventeen hours straight, drive forty miles home, sleep for a while and then return to the slaughterhouse. He did this for four months. "I'll remember that till the day I die," he says. Jose now works forty-eight hours a week at the Monfort plant and about twenty-five hours a week at a local fast-food restaurant. His wife works fifty-six hours a week at two different restaurants. They still have payments to make on their trailer home, and they have two teenage children. Though he has worked at the Monfort beef plant for more than a decade, Jose earns an hourly wage that is only twenty cents higher than the starting wage. "But the whole thing is," he tells me, as though revealing a dark secret, "if they'd just pay a decent wage so I didn't have to pull two jobs, you know, it wouldn't be a bad place to work."

The speed of the production line at a slaughterhouse is largely responsible not only for the high injury rate but also for the contamination of the meat. The problem starts in the feedlots. A government health official, who prefers not to be named, compares the sanitary conditions at a modern feedlot to those of a crowded European city during the Middle Ages, when people dumped their chamber pots out the windows, raw sewage ran in the streets and epidemics raged. The cattle now packed into feedlots get little exercise and live amid pools of manure. Far removed from their natural habitats, the cattle become more prone to illnesses. And what they are fed often contributes to the spread of disease. The rise in grain prices has encouraged the feeding of less-expensive materials to cattle, especially substances with a high protein content that can accelerate growth. About eighty percent of the cattle in the United States were routinely fed slaughterhouse wastes – the rendered remains of dead sheep and dead cattle – until August 1997. The USDA banned the practice, hoping to prevent a domestic outbreak of mad-cow disease. Millions of dead cats and dead dogs, purchased from animal shelters, are being fed to cattle each year, along with dead ducks, geese, elk and deer. Steven P. Bjerklie, a former editor of the trade journal *Meat and Poultry*, is appalled by what often winds up in cattle feed. "Goddamn it, these cattle are ruminants," Bjerklie says. "They're designed to eat grass and, maybe, grain. I mean, they have four stomachs for a reason: to eat products that have a high cellulose content. They are not designed to eat other animals."

The slaughterhouse tasks most likely to contaminate meat are the removal of an animal's hide and the evisceration of its digestive system. The hides are now removed by machine; but if a hide has not been adequately cleaned first, pieces of dirt and manure may fall from it onto the meat. Stomachs and intestines are still pulled out of cattle by hand; if the job is not performed carefully, the contents of the digestive system may spill everywhere. Workers being rushed are bound to make mistakes. The consequences of one error are quickly multiplied. Knives are supposed to be cleaned and disinfected every few minutes, something that workers in a hurry tend to forget. "If a knife gets contaminated," Bjerklie says, "then it's just going to spread that contamination to everything it touches." The literature on the causes of food poisoning is full of euphemisms and dry scientific terms: fecal coliform levels, food-borne pathogens, total plate counts, et al. Behind them all lies a simple explanation for why most people get sick: There is shit on the meat.

ONE NIGHT I VISIT A SLAUGHTERHOUSE SOMEwhere in the high plains. The slaughterhouse is one of the nation's largest. About 5,000 head of cattle enter it every day, single file, and leave in a different form. Someone who has access to the plant, who is upset by its working conditions, offers to give me a tour. The slaughterhouse is an immense building, gray and square, about three stories high with no windows on the front and no architectural clues to what's happening inside. My friend gives me a chain-mail apron and gloves, suggesting I try them on. Workers on the line wear about eight pounds of chain mail beneath their white coats – shiny steel armor that covers their hands, wrists, stomach and back. The chain mail is designed to protect workers from cutting themselves and from being cut by other workers. But knives somehow manage to get around it. My host hands me some Wellingtons, the kind of knee-high rubber boots that English gentlemen wear in the countryside. "Tuck your pants into the boots," he says. "We'll be walking through some blood."

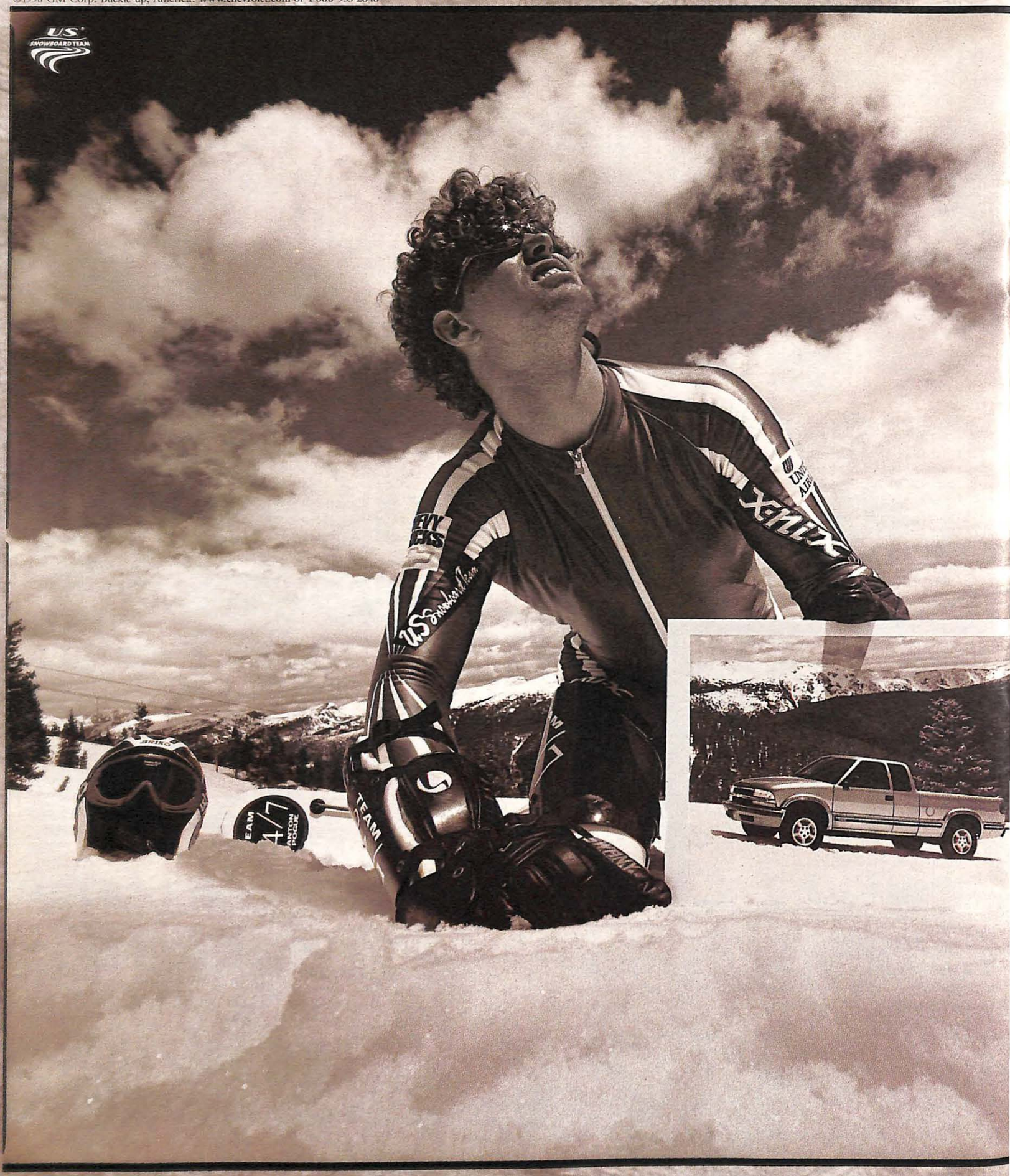
I put on a hard hat and climb a stairway. The sounds get louder – factory sounds, the noise of power tools and machinery, bursts of compressed air. We start at the end of the line, the fabricating [*Cont. on 134*]



"Nature is smart as hell": Tom Lasater and his son Dale run a profitable private cattle ranch that feeds the stock neither hormones nor antibiotics nor steroids. Its land is free of pesticides, herbicides and commercial fertilizer.

ROB BUCHANAN; CONWAY PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CONWAY FAMILY

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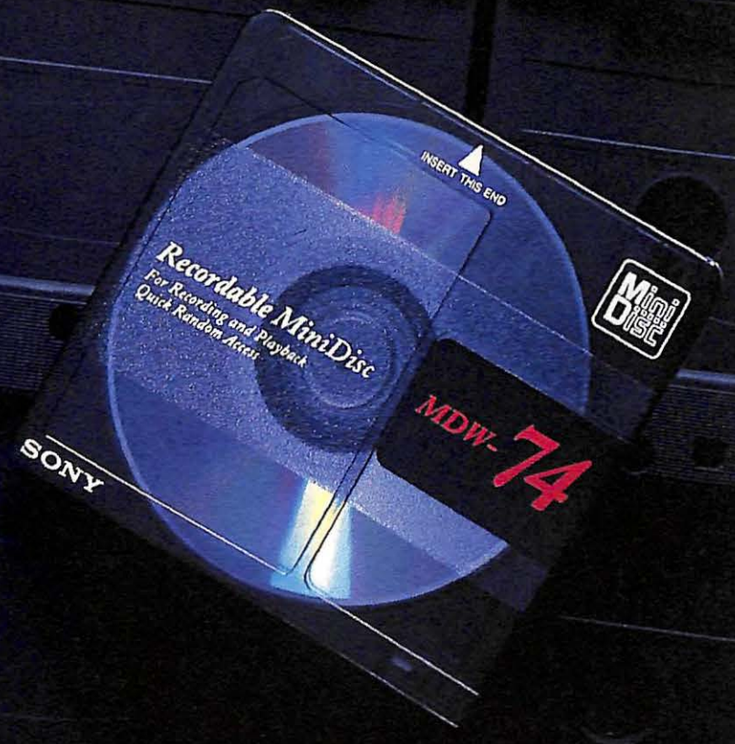
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Test-driving Motorola's i1000 and the V-Series mobiles

DIGITAL

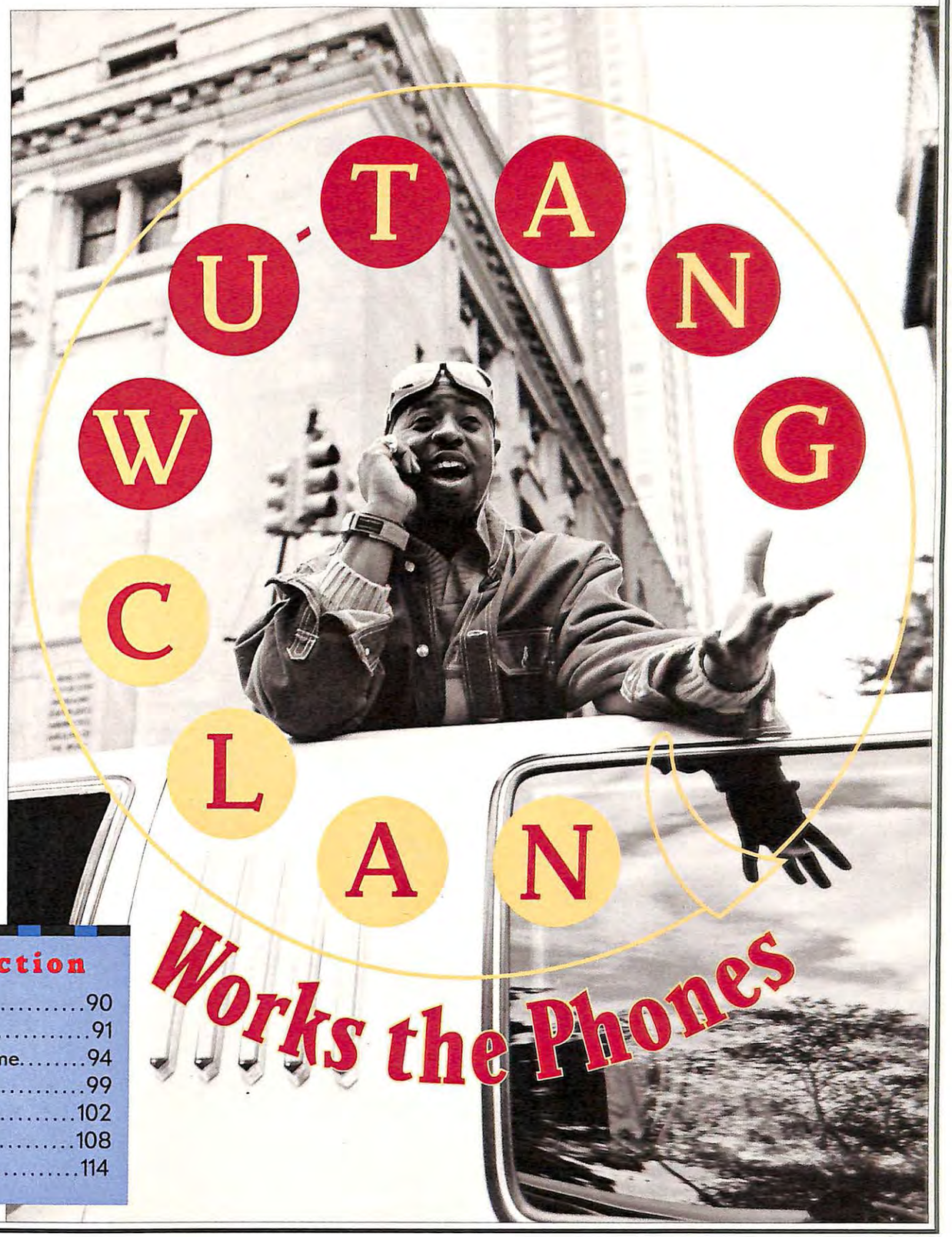
FALL '98

WITH TEN MEMBERS, EIGHT SOLO PROJECTS IN THE WORKS AND A SWARM OF MANAGERS, CELLULAR COMMUNICATION IS A NECESSITY

BY ANTHONY BOZZA

WU-TANG CLAN and the people who surround it communicate with the frequency and urgency of a shuttle mission leaving Cape Canaveral. The Wu, you see, is not so much a ten-member rap group from Staten Island as it is a chaotic way of life. Wu-Tangers release solo albums on a distracting array of different labels; then there's Wu Wear, their national clothing line (with its own store), and the usual video shoots, recording sessions and shows. Most of the Clan's members have children, and all of them make time for their families. Life is hectic.

"We're a unit," proclaims Power, the business mind behind Wu Wear and most of the group's deals. "A unit is always in communication. You need to monitor your components." Today, a

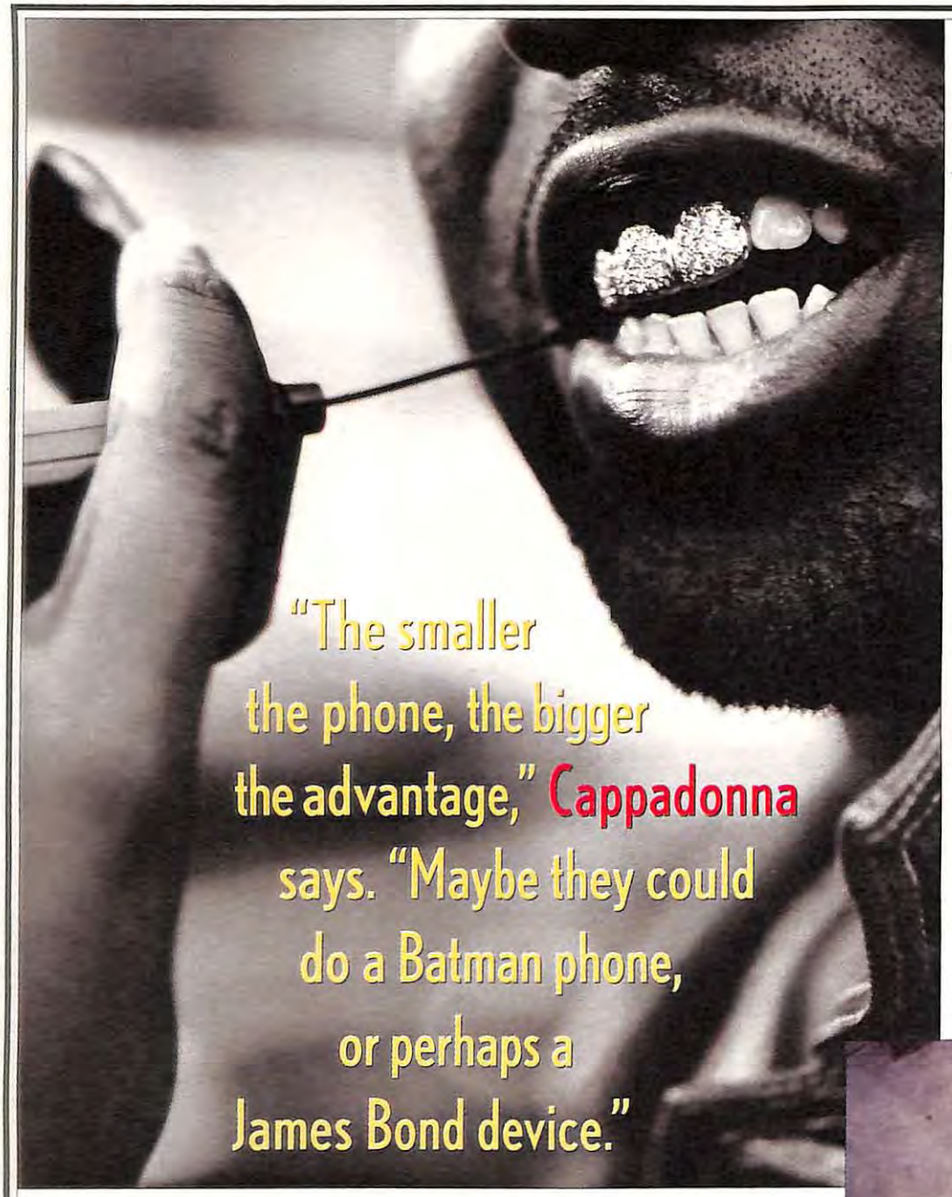


It works inside the limo, too: Cappadonna with his subcompact V-Series in full effect.

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WU-TANG PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOBBY FISHER



Above: Cappadonna demonstrates proper antenna extension. Right: Loud Records' Rifkind checks in.

few of said components are on the Manhattan set of *Black and White*, a film by James Toback that explores the relationship between a group of Upper East Side whites and a collective of black rappers. Power and Raekwon have starring roles alongside Ben Stiller (that's "Benzilla" to Wu-Tang), Robert Downey Jr., Brooke Shields, Claudia Schiffer and a host of cameos, including Mike Tyson in his big-screen debut. Cappadonna is somewhere nearby, here to lend support and to meet Iron Mike. A cluster of groupies hovers as a constant stream of film staffers, friends and associates filters in and out of the Wu trailer.

Inside, it's ground zero. Power intermittently barks into his Motorola i1000 mobile phone, a few Wu Wear reps stop in, and soon the narrow trailer is stuffed. Raekwon, who is kicking back on the couch, calls Inspectah Deck, who is "taking care of some personals" in Jersey but may stop in later. Two other phones start ringing, and everybody checks theirs. "It's crazy in here, man!" Rae yells, brandishing his phone. "Phones ringing all over this motherfucker. What? Yeah, I can hear you."

The frenetic energy surrounding Wu-Tang is turned up a notch today – Claudia Schiffer may be floating about the set. Steve Rifkind, the owner of Wu's label, Loud Records, calls from L.A. Power clicks on the speakerphone. Let's listen in.

POWER: Yo, Steve, where you at?
RIFKIND: In my back yard. Have you seen Claudia?
POWER: Nah.
RIFKIND: Power, who's got the soundtrack deal to this movie?
POWER: I got it.
RIFKIND: When's it coming out?
POWER: Summer.
RAEKWON: Steve, we trying to be award winners right here! Straight up.
POWER: It's gonna be in the Cannes Film Festival in May.
RIFKIND: Cannes is incredible. We're going together.
POWER: Let's do it.
RIFKIND: Is Claudia coming?
POWER: No doubt she comin'. Hold on, Steve, my other line. Yo yo yo, what up? Hold that thought. [*Switches back*] Steve? Rae wants you.
RAEKWON: Mr. Rifkind.
RIFKIND: Mr. Rae.
RAEKWON: What's going on? You ready for me?
RIFKIND: Yeah, I'm ready. The movie going well?
RAEKWON: The movie's going excellent. I want to do press on this thing. I want to do it like Muhammad Ali at the Thrilla in Manila.

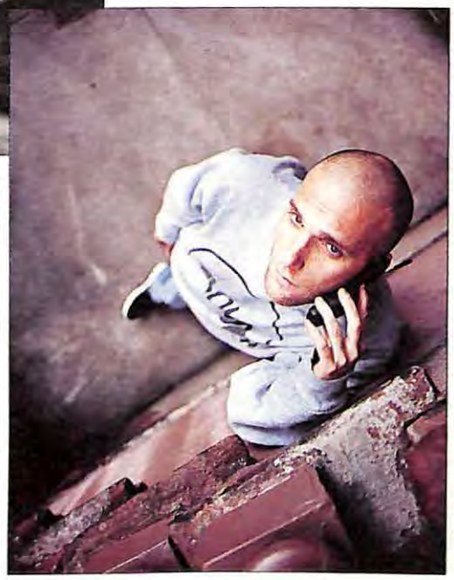
Raekwon and Power both have Motorola i1000s, compact units that open like *Star Trek* communicators. The phone is both digital and analog. It has Caller ID, text paging, call waiting and speakerphone, and – this is cool – it's connected to the private satellite provider Nextel and so features a walkie-talkie capability within the user's central calling area. (In the case of the Wus, the range extends as far north as Connecticut and as far south as New Jersey.) Raekwon's phone beeps, and his publicist's voice comes over the speaker.

RAEKWON: What's up, baby? What's the matter?
PUBLICIST: Are you coming to Wyclef's surprise party tonight?
RAEKWON: C'mon, baby, you know I'm politickin' right now. You enjoy yourself at the party and send my regards to him, aiight? My love is there, my spirit is there, but I'm trying to focus on Rae right now.
PUBLICIST: You're a superstar.
RAEKWON: C'mon, baby, the only stars I know are in the sky. I'm just a replica of something powerful, that's all. I got the power to teach and build, serve and protect. See what I'm sayin'? Word up. You know what time it is. [*Silence*] Where you at? You at the movie set with me?
PUBLICIST: No, sweetie, I'm in SoHo.
RAEKWON: Yo, when you out there, pick me up a pack a drawers and some hats and shit. I need a crisp pair of white-on-white Nikes. Straight up. You know my size – eight and a half.

Raekwon, over and out. "This phone is the shit right here," he says. "You always want to be on that. We call that walkie-talkie life or death. Yo, you always want to know where your people at. The most illest shit they could have done is giving you the power to hear someone just like that. You got twenty cats down with you and you got twenty of these shits – it's real."

"Word," Power says. "I wanna be able to hit cats as long as they in the vicinity. Brooklyn, Bronx, New Jersey – any of the five boroughs, we still all in the same place at the same time, at the flip of a button. It just go to show that the digital, modern technology is real."

A wardrobe staffer knocks on the trailer door and informs Rae and Power that they're needed for rehearsal. Everyone piles out as the two Wus are led onto a gym set – replete with burly boxers

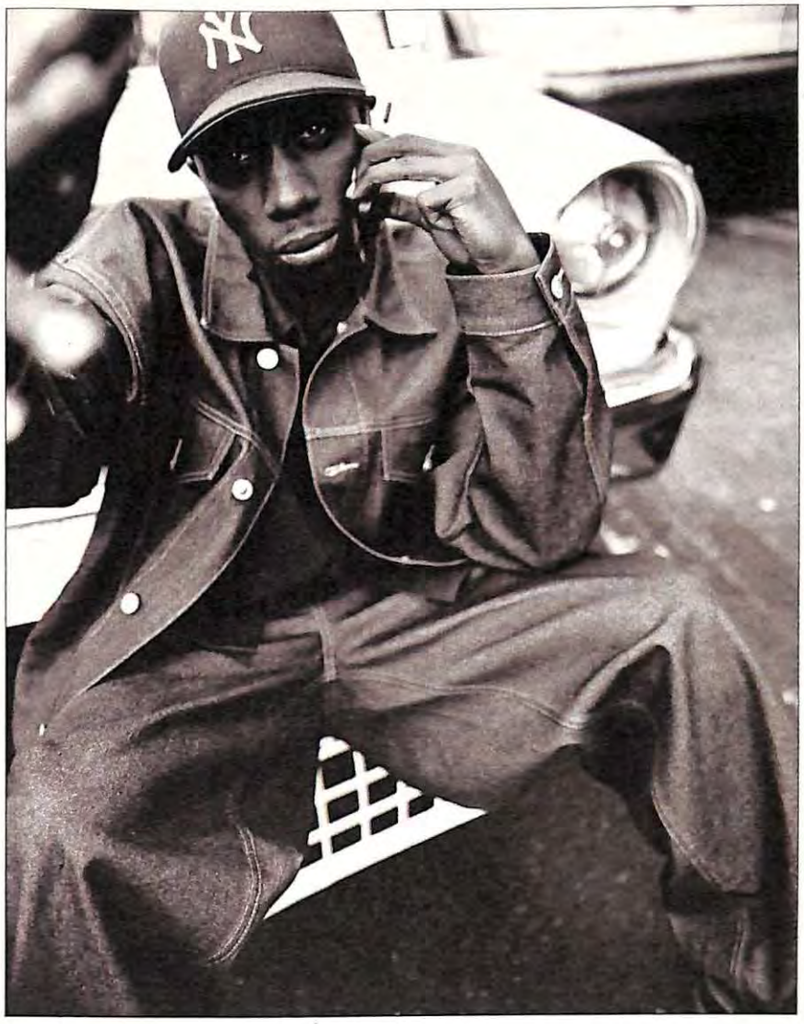


MOTOROLA i1000

Price.....$300
Length.....4.5 inches (closed)
Width.....2.2 inches
Weight.....5 ounces
Battery life.....100–180 talk minutes
36–60 hours standby
Features.....100-number memory, speakerphone, walkie-talkie capability, three-way calling, Caller ID, call waiting, alphanumeric paging, call forwarding, speed dial, vibrate, digital service
Contact.....800-NEXTEL9
www.nextel.com



ANTHONY BOZZA *is known to Wu-Tang Clan as Rolling Bones. Don't ask.*



Ghostface Killah: The tiny V-Series model is nearly invisible in the hand of Ghostface Killah.

MOTOROLA V-SERIES

Price.....$700 with service
Length.....3.5 inches (closed)
Width.....1.5 inches
Weight.....2.7 ounces
Battery life.....65–170 talk minutes
24–70 hours standby
Features....Vibrate, built-in answering machine; stores 99 numbers
Contact.....800-331-6456
www.startac.com



working out and Tyson, who sits in an office surrounded by very authentic Mafiosi types. As the director blocks the scene, Power's phone rings. "Yo, what up?" he says as he sidles over to the window, keeping one eye on the action.

AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE set, Cappadonna is sitting in a white stretch limo. He has four, maybe five peeps from his neighborhood with him today – it's hard to tell who was invited – and Mike Tyson's sister in the back seat. He blows in a call to his publicist, who is standing on the sidewalk half a block away, to order his lunch: a foot-long tuna sub. "Foot-long," he insists.

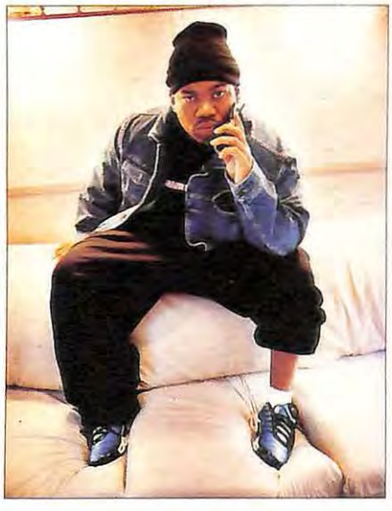
Cappa whips open his Motorola V-Series, the smallest mobile phone on the market; when closed, it's the size of a pack of Bubble Yum. "This phone has got good reception," he says. "The size is good, it's compact – it's not like you're fronting or anything. Very conservative, very comfortable. I like that." Cap's eyes draw a bead. "Hey, how you doin'?" he says to a passing blond girl, who smiles at him. "I haven't seen you in a long time." They chat awhile before Cap borrows paper and a pen from his interlocutor. He gives her his cell number and says goodbye. "Call me later tonight," he says. And who was that? "I don't know. I just met her."

Rehearsal over, Tyson drops in for a quick hang. After he's gone, Cap quickly calls his friend Boy Blue. "Yo, it's me, J-bird. I was just chillin' with Tyson." J-bird hangs up, slips his phone into his pocket and holds forth on what makes a worthy cellie: "Reasonable rates and good reception. This one right here, I can use it in a store; right now I'm between a lot of tall buildings, and it sounds good. I guess maybe the smaller the phone, the bigger the advantage." Cap has been listening to his solo effort, *The Pillage*, and he tracks back to hear the songs he missed while talking to the blonde. "I think soon they gonna have cell phones with perhaps a monitor device as a watch for your wrist, so you can tap right in and talk and listen at one time, with very good reception. Maybe they could do a Batman phone, or perhaps a James Bond device. That will all be beneficial to us in the days to come."

Back in the Wu trailer, Power and Rae are entertaining Iron Mike and model Bijou Phillips, who have a common friend in David Blaine, the celebrity magician. Phillips uses Rae's phone to dial up Blaine, and Tyson leaves him a message. "Yo, my nigga!" he says by way of a greeting. "This is Mike Tyson. We chillin' out. You gotta get your ass down here!"

Someone calls to give the word that Cappadonna is watching a porno in the limo, if anybody wants to drop in. The conversation swirls around from the film to the rap game to Tyson's career setbacks and everyone's future projects. Time rolls by, and soon the crew is ready to shoot. Rae slips his phone into the pocket of his blue velour sweat suit and heads out. "I pull this out and people think I got a little baby beeper box in my hand," he remarks. "But it's a phone. That's my whole style – I be freakin' 'em. Havin' the latest new things of technology, you just want to show it, like, 'Yeah, you can hold it.' Most importantly, when I'm coming through the movie theater, I can let my niggas know – 'Yo, I'm up at the flicks right now. I gonna be up here two hours. I'll get with y'all later, but I'm all right.' That's how the Clan niggas like to roll. You might see ten of us together, you might only see one of us, but we always right in touch." ◆

"I pull this out and people think I got a little baby beeper box," says Raekwon. "But it's a phone. That's my whole style – I be freakin' 'em."



Raekwon connects with the Clan.

BOOKMARKS



ROBERT SMITH *The Cure*
www.nis.net/artifacts/index.html I went on the Net to see who was selling dinosaur eggs. I've always wanted one, since I was little. It just sits in my music room, and I look at it sometimes, blankly, when I'm struggling to find the next chord. That's the best thing about the Internet – that you can find where to buy things and what's going on.

www.wsc.co.uk/wsc When Saturday Comes, a very humorous look at football – like, soccer.

www.findagrave.com tells where famous people are buried. It's ghoulish.

www.users.cloud9.net/~patrick/anomalist The Anomalist, a magazine about all the unexplained, weird stuff that happens – everything from spontaneous human combustion to crop circles. –LIZA GHORBANI

PHONES PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAVIES + STARR

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RANDOM ACCESS

WEB SITES WORTH CHECKING OUT

BY ROBERT MORITZ

THE WWW SPEEDTRAP REGISTRY *www.speedtrap.com* Call it a nationwide Neighborhood Watch for hooligans. The Web's most comprehensive speed-trap registry is a meticulous list compiled by very concerned, very fast drivers. It catalogs every blind corner and bridge abutment, right down to exact latitude and longitude, where a radar gun may lurk.

Speedtrap.com welcomes your input (just click on Add Traps), but be prepared to provide minutiae like speed-measuring technology (radar, for example), what type of cars the local heat drive and how much the fine is if you get pinched. And show the cops some respect: "If you refer to cops in rude ways," Speedtrap warns, "your entry will be deleted."

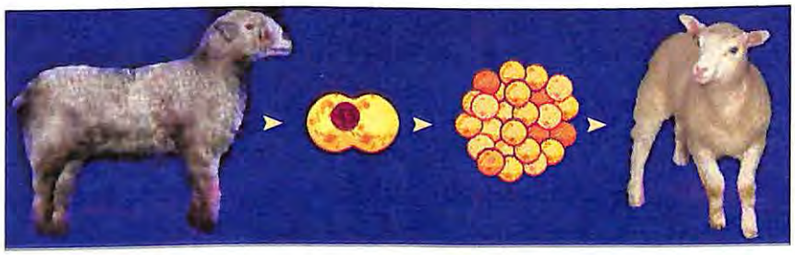


Terra-fying! If you live on planet Earth, find your neighborhood on Microsoft's TerraServer database.

TERRASERVER *www.terraserver.microsoft.com* Touted as the world's largest online database, Microsoft's TerraServer is a zoomable map of planet Earth, comprising satellite images and a complete road map; you can flip back and forth between these options. When you log onto this behemoth, choose from a list of countries, states, towns and cool landmarks (the Anheuser-Busch brewery, listed under "St. Louis Points of Interest," is clearly visible from a mile off the ground). TerraServer is as close as you can get to Harrison Ford's satellite battle scene in *Patriot Games* without violating federal law.

CONCEIVING A CLONE *www.library.advanced.org/24355/home.html* How long will it be until the world can safely, legally and morally clone the cast of *Dawson's Creek*? The Conceiving a Clone Web site is the Internet's most authoritative resource for the lowdown on everything cloning. Addressing misconceptions ("A clone will not have a soul"), implications (the advent of "living drug factories") and official viewpoints (Church of England: "Cloning humans is not desirable. But cloning sheep has its uses"), this site has it all. For example, the Cloning Timeline offers an exhaustive study of the science's history, beginning with an 1885 cell-differentiation theory and moving on through the Dallas couple who recently paid $2.3 million to have their eleven-year-old dog cloned. For real kicks, try your hand at the interactive Create a Clone demo (Step 1: Drag the nucleus to the trash. Step 2: Drag the donor cell to the petri dish....").

YAHOO! GAMES *www.play.yahoo.com* The place to be for a jolt of wholesome, old-fashioned gaming. Set in real time, using Java technology, Yahoo!'s live game site gets back to the basics: backgammon, checkers, chess, Reversi and all of your favorite Sunday-hangover card games. Log in, choose a nifty icon to represent you (devil with horns, boy with cap, dork with goatee) and opt to join games in progress or set up your own game. Best of all, every game has a chat window at the bottom of the screen that lets a player talk shit with opponents – who are as likely to be playing from a hut in Irian Jaya as from a studio in Manhattan. When you sign off, the site remembers who you are – so when you return to play again, Yahoo! knows whether you're a shark or a pigeon. ◆



QUESTION & ANSWER

How do I make cheap long-distance phone calls over the Internet?

IF YOU'VE GOT A RELATIVELY up-to-date computer – one with speakers, a microphone and sound capability – then there's a good chance you already have everything you need to make long-distance calls through the Internet, although current technology still permits only primitive, mostly walkie-talkie-type communication. All you have to do is install a program like Microsoft NetMeeting, which is included in current versions of Internet Explorer (and available as a free download at *www.microsoft.com/msdownload*), or VocalTec's Internet Phone (downloadable at *www.vocaltec.com*). Like online chatting, verbal conversations on the Net are initiated simply by clicking on the name of the person you want to talk to, provided that person also has NetMeeting or another phone program that supports – in technical terms – the H.323 standard.



For basic voice transmission, that's it. If you want to talk and listen at the same time, however, you'll need to install into your system a full-duplex sound card, which generally goes for about eighty dollars. A more expensive version, Quicknet's Internet PhoneJack ($160, *www.quicknet.net*), provides the added bonus of allowing you to use your regular phone along with the Internet phone program.

But the simplest way to connect over the Net obviates the need for a computer altogether. The Aplio ($200, *www.aplio.com*) is a small, speakerphonelike gadget that connects to your phone. It digitizes voice signals and sends them through the Net to the person you're calling – anywhere in the world – for the price of a call to your local Internet service provider. The drawback is that the person you're calling has to have his or her Aplio activated in order to receive the call, which means the phone is no good for regular phone use. If you're willing to incur a small long-distance charge, however, you can avoid this hassle: Make your call on the regular phone line, turn on the Aplio when the person you're calling picks up, and your call will be rerouted through your ISP. Aplio technology may soon be upgraded so that only one caller has to have the hardware. A final thing to consider: The Aplio is not compatible with America Online.

In general, calling over the Internet is a good deal, but audio quality is still much worse than what you get from a traditional long-distance service. Expect echo effects, tinny sound and broken sentences – not very different from the earliest days of CB radios and international phone calls. These kinds of problems may disappear in the near future, however, as higher-bandwidth options minimize some of the audio-quality glitches. As far as the phone companies go, they're currently pressuring the Federal Communications Commission to tax Internet calls, but so far the FCC is taking a wait-and-see attitude. In other words, scam while you can. –TOM SAMILJAN

BOOKMARKS



DEAN WAREHAM *Luna*
www.frankenstein.com/lee/
It's the [producer-songwriter] Lee Hazlewood Web site, which I find informative. I'm a big fan. *www.amazon.com* I bought a book that I was looking for for a long time – *Flight of the Falcon*, about Christopher Boyce. It's the sequel to the book *The Falcon and the Snowman*, and for the life of me, I couldn't find it anywhere else. *www.daddys.com* Daddy's Junky Music. It's all, like, musical equipment. It's a good place to get a drum machine and stuff like that. *www.yahoo.com* I bought my car via the Internet – I just went to Yahoo! and looked for Japanese cars under a certain price. It's a '93 Subaru, and, unfortunately, it's purple. –L.G.

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Master of the Game





WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE MAN WHO INVENTED DOOM AND QUAKE?

BY CYNTHIA TRUE



A prince among monsters: John Romero is the mind and the soul behind the shooter revolution.

LATE ON A SUMMER NIGHT in downtown Dallas, just as the brutal heat backs off for a few hours, high-pitched wails start to fill one of the city's premier penthouse offices. "Suck it down, bitch!" a voice screams from one office. "You fucking *girl!*" howls another. Accompanying the voices is the frantic tapping of keyboards and the occasional groan from a dying monster on a computer screen. New expletives are invented – "Cock spray!" "Shit mop!" – as more die in bloody gun battles. It's close to midnight, and these are the sounds of a Quake death match in the offices of Ion Storm, computer gaming's most renegade operation.

John Romero, the company's thirty-one-year-old founder, has turned on his intercom – the better to amplify his own poetic strings of profanity. "Suck it down!" he cries as he wipes out another enemy 'droid. A little more than two years ago, at id Software, Romero created Quake, so the twenty or so employees taking him on are literally trying to beat him at his own game. The objective is simple: Run around the tiered environments – known as levels – of Quake's three-dimensional gonzo-Gothic world and slaughter as many of your opponents as you can. The one who gets, say, twenty kills first wins. Or the one who beats the clock. The basic idea remains the same: survival of the fittest.

For Romero, that's never been a problem. Game designers are rarely known to their fans – there's Robyn and Rand Miller, who did Myst for Broderbund; Richard Garriott, who designed all the Ultima games; and, of course, Shigeru Miyamoto, creator of Super Mario – but even in this league, Romero stands apart. As the creator of Wolfenstein 3-D, Doom and Quake, he set the gold standard for computer gaming before he hit the age of twenty-five. He's not just a star. He's a superstar. And now the world awaits his next creation, the much-anticipated Daikatana. But the game is more than a year late, and naysayers wonder whether it can possibly exceed the thrill of his past blockbusters.

HOUSED UNDER A GLASS DOME fifty-five floors up in Dallas' Chase Tower, Ion Storm is a testament to Romero's pre-eminence. The skyscraper was built with oil money, and as the embattled Texas economy rides back on the shoulders of technology billions, the symbolism of Ion Storm occupying the top floor is not terribly subtle.

Inside, emerald-green elevator doors open onto an entry hall lined with huge posters of Romero's games. There's a fully equipped game room and a lounge with a sound studio to mix game soundtracks, but the office's crown jewel is the screening room. Soundproof, with a 135-inch screen, THX surround sound and $40,000 worth of leather chairs, it functions both as a fancy place to screen game trailers and, more often, as a late-night employee cinema. Tonight, as I wander around, twenty-six-year-old producer Jake Hughes is watching *Microcosmos* with nineteen-year-old Joey Liaw, a lead programmer. Joey could be doing much the same thing in a college dorm: He nailed a 1600 on his SAT, and Stanford let him defer for a year so he could take a job with Romero for about $50,000 a year.

Work is so bound in play at Ion Storm that there is really no good reason for most of the guys, single and in their twenties, to go home to their little apartments. The office's bathrooms have lockers and showers, and there are a few cubby beds – not to mention the endless number of leather couches. Squirrel – a programmer – once stayed at the office for nineteen days. Eight days in, he went to the drugstore and bought a family pack of underwear and socks.

Romero finds most of his programmers and level designers on the Net – the best place to meet committed gamers. "At the end of the day, we're all playing together," says Romero, who in non-match mode is mild-mannered and almost shy. "It's not like everybody goes home at five. Their whole life is games."

ROMERO HAS BEEN DREAMING OF this – a computer-gaming company run exclusively by designers – for almost a decade. In 1992 he founded id Software with programmers John Carmack, Adrian Carmack (no relation) and level designer Tom Hall. In four and a half years, id produced Wolfenstein 3-D, Doom, Doom II and Quake, each selling better than the last, with Quake selling more than 1.7 million copies in its first year out (most games sell about 100,000). The



phenomenal sales were due in large part to software developed by John Carmack that allowed the games to run directly on a player's PC. Romero's designs – the story lines that hook you in seconds and the sounds that make death come alive – are what made the games so revolutionary.

But as id became successful, its focus grew more technical, and John Carmack – as the lead programmer – gained more

---

CYNTHIA TRUE *is working on a biography of Bill Hicks for Avon Books.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN SCHOELLER



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E

PLUG AND PLAY

THE HEART OF THE SPLATTER



FIVE PLACES TO PLAY GAMES ON THE WEB

BY CHRIS HUDAK



MOST COMPUTER GAMES are designed to be fun and challenging even when you're playing alone. But let's face it: Artificial intelligence has shit for brains, and it's going to be a long time before a computer can crank out anything like the competition that another flesh-and-blood player can offer (i.e., with intuition, cowardice, arrogance). Fortunately, all you need is a 28.8-Kbps modem and an Internet connection, and you have instant access to thousands of other losers like yourself. Here's the rundown on some of the best, most accessible war zones in cyberspace: dogfights, fistfights, fishing tourneys, tactical nuclear exchanges – they're all waiting for you at the screech of a modem ... and most of them are free.



TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK *www.ten.net*

Price: Some games are free; there is a twenty-dollar-per-month subscription for others.

TEN is the most popular network for the bloody first-person brawls of Quake and the home battle arena of the Professional Gamers' League (ten dollars for four months). The PGL, which is an online group for those who want to turn computer gaming into a paying proposition (last year's champion walked away with a Ferrari), claims to be as organized as professional football or baseball.

HEAT ONLINE GAMING NETWORK *www.heat.net*

Price: Premium membership is six dollars a month; basic membership is free.

Launched with the tongue-in-cheek premise that converting hostile combat impulses into a productive and safe cyberspace experience, the Heat Online Gaming Network gives gamers the opportunity to play for points called degrees, which can be exchanged for cash and prizes in the real world.



(Get ready to pay to get paid: Only premium members can earn degrees.) The adventure shooter Vigilance makes its home here, as does Net Fighter (an arcade-style combat game). Coming soon: 10 Six, a proposed million-player game that would run continuously – even when you're logged off.

WORLD OPPONENT NETWORK *www.won.net*

Price: Free

If monsters and missile launchers weird you out, World Opponent Network offers more-terrestrial challenges, ranging from World War I-era dogfights like Red Baron II to bass-fishing tournaments (right now, fishing simulators are big business). WON also hosts Unreal, the science-fiction shooter that is rapidly eclipsing Quake and Quake II as the Web's first-person king of the hill.

WESTWOOD ONLINE *www.westwood.com*

Price: Free

One of the first online gaming services for Monopoly CD-ROM players, Westwood Online has recently gained renown for the famed Command and Conquer line of real-time strategy games, to which many a hollow-eyed warrior has lost a night's sleep, or a job, or a spouse. Westwood Online also offers the recently released Dune 2000 and is the future home of the long-awaited Tiberian Sun, a bleak, futuristic third installment of the Command and Conquer saga.



BATTLE.NET *www.battle.net*

Price: Free

Battle.net is the gaming service provided by the makers of a string of software hits, including fantasy-strategy games like Warcraft II, Diablo and the *Alien*-influenced StarCraft. Battle.net offers one-on-one, alliance or team games (with up to eight players per team). If there's a strategy game on the market that poses a serious threat to the popular reign of Command and Conquer, StarCraft is it. ◆

Game theory: StarCraft, Red Baron II, Trophy Bass, Command and Conquer Universe, Vigilance (from top)

and more control. Romero itched to get out on his own. At id, he always had to wait on Carmack for a better engine – the software that enables 3-D game play – but as far as Romero was concerned, the latest Quake engine was good enough for any new game he wanted to design. "We have entered the age of 3-D, basically, and we're not gonna design in 4-D," Romero says. "It's just gonna look better and go faster in the future. And that's not where I want to spend my time, because that's not the point of playing the game."

By founding Ion Storm himself, with no techie counterpart, Romero made a very public statement about the importance of technology vs. design. And as the Steven Spielberg of game design, Romero had no trouble attracting investors. Eidos Interactive, a British game publisher and distributor, gave him a $10 million advance (later increased to $28 million), and the rest of the industry sat up and took notice. To get around the fact that Ion Storm wouldn't be anchored by a programmer, Romero, along with partners Tom Hall and Todd Porter, decided simply to lease the technology, specifically the Quake game engine, from id.

At Ion Storm, work is so bound in play, there is really no reason for the guys to go home. Squirrel spent nineteen days at the office.



"The super-bad-ass dude": A Daikatana 'bot

"JOHN ROMERO IS GOING TO MAKE you his bitch," an early Daikatana advertisement promised. Whereas Quake has fifteen monsters, Daikatana will have sixty-five. Quake has eleven songs; Daikatana will have eighteen to twenty. Quake: eight weapons; Daikatana: thirty. And forget the usual subterranean environments. In Daikatana, players will explore four distinct worlds, each with eight levels of detailed graphic design so far unknown in an action shooter.

But so far the promised masterpiece is nowhere to be seen, and Ion Storm has produced only one title, Todd Porter's Dominion: Storm Over Gift3. The reviews of the game were poor, and sales not much better, although Romero says it's doing really well in Europe. There's also been upheaval in the staff. One CEO has left the company to form a publishing firm called g.o.d. (Gathering of Developers); a slew of employees have been laid off to cut costs; and there is a persistent rumor that Eidos is buying a chunk of the company, although both parties flatly deny it.

So it is all up to Daikatana, which, although it's now scheduled for release during the first quarter of '99, could miss that deadline, too. The sheer scope of the project, Romero says, with all its elaborate content and refined graphics, was simply more demanding than he had anticipated. The other problem, ironically, is that Romero decided to wait for new game technology from John Carmack at id – the very kind of dependence on technology he wanted to avoid when he founded Ion Storm. Romero had been developing Daikatana on the old Quake engine, but when his former partners released Quake II, he wanted to use the more evolved version. "We had to revamp all our data," he explains. "The ante just keeps getting higher. We don't want to release a game that's technically inferior to anything else. The longer we work on it, the better it's going to be. We could release it with ten other games and have it look nice, or we can wait and have it look great."

That may be true, but the delay has prompted magazines and Web sites to speculate that Ion Storm is just a bunch of hype. "You guys have been around for two years with no original product to show for it," whined an online editorial. "I think those penthouse offices are making you guys soft." The "Romero is over" backlash reached fever pitch in August when Romero posed as a corpse for *Texas Monthly*, and the Adrenaline Vault, a gaming Web site, posted a hysterical announcement that he was, literally, dead.

Still, when Daikatana previewed at ECTS, the London gaming trade show, in September, the response was overwhelmingly – if somewhat grudgingly – positive. "People absolutely loved it," says Romero happily. "One guy called

it the *Mona Lisa* of the twenty-first century." In the game, the player assumes the role of Hiro Miyamoto (named in honor of the Super Mario creator), who is desperately trying to recover the Daikatana, an ancient samurai sword that will enable him to return to the past. Helping him are two sidekicks, Superfly Johnson and Mikiko, who are both 'bots – and therein lies one of the game's most awaited innovations. "Basically," Romero says, "the first-person shooter has always been you, the super-badass dude, going through crazy odds destroying everything. In Daikatana you're still going through crazy odds, but you'll be traveling with partners."

Daikatana is also one of the new generation of 3-D games that focus on artificial intelligence as a major component of game play. "One neat AI thing in Daikatana," Romero says, "is, you've got two monsters hiding from you behind pillars. As you walk around the pillar to find one, he'll run around the other way. And while you're chasing one, the other will shoot you in the back. They play more like humans, with perfect reflexes. It's really, really hard. With two monsters in that room, you won't survive."

JOHN ROMERO LIVES IN A FOURTEEN-room house that is part of a gated community outside Dallas. There's a pool, a golf course, a couple of BMWs and a Ferrari Testarossa. He and his second wife, Beth, moved here six and a half years ago and share the neighborhood with other local high-tech magnates.

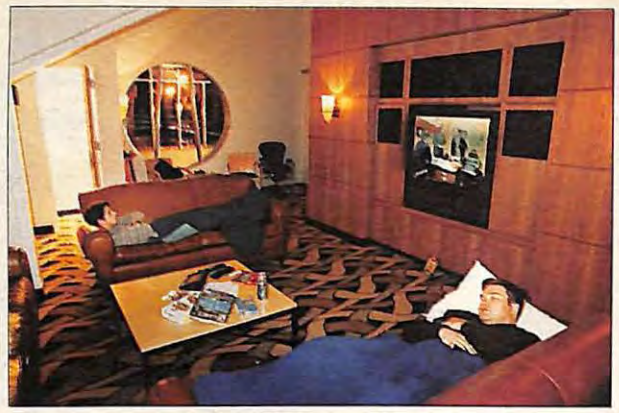
Romero never planned for this. For as long as he can remember, all he ever wanted to do was play games, and when he wasn't playing games, he wanted to make them. His first obsession was Pac-Man. Unlike other video games, Romero says, "it wasn't just 'Kill the alien.' You had to escape! I think I could get up to Peaches without even looking at the screen. That's how hard-core I was."

Soon enough he figured out he could design his own games. During the day he'd tune out his teachers and churn out games for every letter of the alphabet. At night he'd fall asleep dreaming in binary code. His parents, naturally, were not happy. "Johnny barely got through high school," says his mother, Ginny Schuneman. "I always knew he was smart, but he had to take biology twice because he just didn't care about it. He didn't care about his grades or anything."

In the middle of Romero's sophomore year of high school, his family moved from Rocklin, California, to Alconbury, England, where his stepfather, a defense contractor, was working with the Air Force. John enrolled at the base high school and signed up for a computer class, where the teacher warned him that he might get lost since he had missed the first semester. "I said, 'Look, I know more about this than you do,' " he says, "and I showed her a bunch of stuff I'd written." The next day she drove Romero over to meet some pilots who were studying Russian flight tactics. "We met this captain and we went into a little room, and he told me they needed someone to help program flight simulation. So I got paid for doing that, and every time I'd go over there to work, they'd have to hide all their secret crap."

He finished high school the next year with a GPA of 1.3, half-heartedly enrolled at a college outside Rocklin, where his parents were again living, and got a job at Burger King. "I could do anything there!" he says. "I could take apart the burger machine and clean it, because I was the only person smart enough to remember where everything went." It was there that he met his first wife, Kelly, when she came in for a Whopper.

Then, in 1987, the newly married



"Their whole life is games": The crew at Ion Storm bring their home to work.

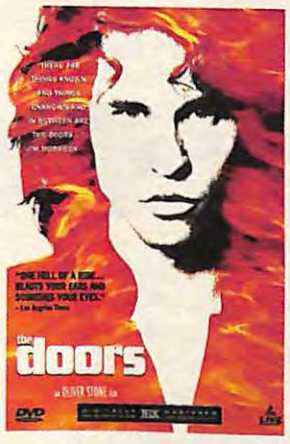
Romero's designs – story lines that hook you in seconds, sounds that make death come alive – are what make the games so revolutionary.

Does your home theater receiver remember your favorite movie?











DSP MODE
DELAY
VOLUME
BASS
REAR LEVELS
CENTER

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twenty-year-old Romero went to Applefest, an industry show in San Francisco, and so impressed the people at the Origin Systems booth that they hired him. After eight months at Origin in Londonderry, New Hampshire, he moved on to SoftDisk in Shreveport, Louisiana, where he met the Carmacks and Tom Hall. And from there, it's history: They founded id, moved to Dallas, and after almost two years of working out of a tiny apartment they also called home, finally hit pay dirt with Wolfenstein 3-D, which sold about 4,000 copies in its first month.

It was at id that Romero hooked up with Mike Wilson, the man who figured out how to mass-market games and was ultimately able to persuade 7-Eleven to carry the Quake shareware. "That was the first time a convenience store had ever carried a game," Wilson says. "We got, like, 3,000 stores. All of the computer-software retailers together only get about 1,800 stores. I mean, 7-Eleven's never gonna sell a forty dollar CD-ROM." Id Software was subsequently able to negotiate the richest royalty deal in history with its distributor, GTE Interactive.

SITTING IN HIS overstuffed couch, Romero drinks a Sprite, Ion Storm's troubles far from his mind. He doesn't worry about Daikatana. He just *knows* it'll be great. Instead he thinks about the endless possibilities for gaming in the next few years.

When he was a kid, all Romero could do was post his initials on the high score of every video game in town; now he'd like to help promote multiplayer gaming as a spectator sport. "I wanted to do this a long time ago. I could see that people were just living on the computer, playing Quake all day," he says, smiling. "Why not make gaming a real sport? Just kind of justify it." He is the chairman of a local cyberathletic league, he promotes various Quake conventions, and he'd like to see scholarships given out to champion gamers. Lately he's been imagining how cool it would be to open up a cyberdome in Dallas. "Like, you'd buy up a Circuit City and theme it out like a Sega Gameworks. You'd put in computers and stuff, and people could come, pay their five bucks and play games together all day."

Romero's parents used to beg him to stay in school and learn some business applications for his computer skills. They warned him that he was on the way to a dead end. "My husband told Johnny he was never going to have a job playing games," says Schuneman. "He did apologize a few years ago."

It's hard to say whether the biggest perk of having vision, passion and a few million bucks is getting the opportunity to help create the future or being able to prove your parents wrong. ◆

PHOTOGRAPH OF SEGA DREAMCAST BY DAVIES + STARR; CHRIS KOLK/OUTLINE (CANIBUS)

in development

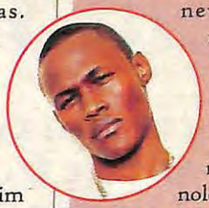


The powerful new 128-bit processor that SEGA DREAMCAST launches in Japan on November 27th, with touchdown in the U.S. scheduled for fall 1999, features a modem that enables players to compete online against other Dreamcast players.

BOOKMARKS

CANIBUS

www.canibus.com
www.Yahoo.com It's the bomb.
www.cypha.com Hip-hop news, classifieds, chat room, etc.
www.sohh.com Hip-hop links, audio files and search engine
www.hiphop.com News, "lyrical combat," profiles and networking



On Technology I'm really into the new VRML programming – it gives you the opportunity to experience virtual reality. But it's still in the prototype stages. The most cutting-edge technological item I have right now is a fingerprint test-control Sony. It's hot. I got it in the airport in London. It costs about a grand. It's touch sensitive. You tap it once to play, twice to go forward, three to go backward, four to switch directions and five to repeat. But my Bose Wave ghetto blaster is my preferred way of listening to music. And in the future, I hope a pocket-size laptop will exist. –L.G.

Why not?

INTRODUCING JVC'S RX-1024VBK DOLBY DIGITAL RECEIVER



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The Record Industry's Digital Daze



The palm-size Rio: Stereo of the future

THANKS TO MP3, THIS COULD FINALLY BE THE END OF THE MUSIC BUSINESS AS WE KNOW IT BY JULIAN DIBBELL

IT'S ANOTHER BUSY WEEKDAY night on the Internet chat channel MP3_Central, where some 150 people have gathered to indulge that most natural of human desires: the urge to share a song you love with someone you think might love it, too.

Of course, with this crowd it's more like the urge to share several hundred songs you love with anyone who's got a Net connection fast enough to suck them all off your hard drive in less than an hour – but still. A couple thousand dollars' worth of CD-quality Canibus, Goo Goo Dolls, Lauryn Hill, Celine Dion, Marilyn Manson, etc., may change hands at MP3_Central before the night is over (and that's not counting the referrals to fly-by-night pirate Web sites, where many hundreds of megabytes may be downloaded), but the transactions come with neither price nor strings attached. If you've got something to trade, great; if not, that's OK, too.

Which, needless to say, does not exactly warm the hearts of a lot of people in the record industry – especially major labels, CD manufacturers and retail outlets. In fact, for more than a year now, industry watchdogs like the Recording Industry Association of America have been howling at an increasingly nervous pitch about the threat of Internet music piracy to the future of "American creativity" (a.k.a. profits from record sales). And right now they're howling louder than ever as computer-peripherals maker Diamond Multimedia Systems prepares to launch a controversial little gadget called the Rio – the first mass-market portable audio device capable of playing songs downloaded from the Net.

What makes the Rio possible, and what's been spooking the record industry for the last eighteen months or so, is a new digital audio standard called MPEG 1 Layer 3, or MP3, which squeezes sound files down to less than a tenth of their original size. That means you can now pop a CD into your computer, copy a song onto your hard drive and then transmit the song to a friend's hard drive over a standard Internet connection in about twenty minutes (the same song uncompressed would take more than three hours).

So far, regular use of MP3 has been limited to the kind of people likely to have the patience to do much of their music listening through a pair of computer speakers – principally hard-core hardware freaks and college students with high-bandwidth Net connections. But now, with the sexy, Walkman-esque Rio scheduled to hit stores this month at prices under $200, that could change. Plug the Rio into your computer, copy a load of MP3 files into its memory and go. It's a no-brainer for consumers and a nightmare for record executives.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVIES + STARR

Is the music you record STILL held together with tape?



Not that Diamond plans to market the Rio as a home bootlegging device. It's the gadget's convenience that the company touts – sixty minutes of music in a box the size of a card deck, twelve hours of play on a single AA battery, no moving parts. And Diamond execs deny that the company's intended buyers will be playing anything but tunes they've acquired legally from the Net or converted from their own CD collections. "We understand there is some pirating of music by MP3s, which we do not condone, promote or endorse," says Diamond vice president of corporate marketing Ken Wirt.



The Beastie Boys have posted remixes and live cuts to be downloaded for free.

The record business seems unconvinced by Diamond's good-citizenship pledge. "The Rio, to me, is like walking into a head shop and buying a bong, and it says, 'For use with tobacco products only,' " says Jim McDermott, vice president of new-media technology for Polygram Group Distribution. "They fucking know it's going to be used for piracy."

Nor has the industry been content just to trash-talk its new nemesis. On October 9th, the RIAA slapped Diamond with a lawsuit, claiming that the Rio violates the Audio Home Recording Act of 1992. That law – passed in response to an earlier music-industry bugbear, digital audiotape – requires manufacturers of digital recording devices to pay a two percent royalty on sales and, more important, to design mechanisms that prevent their devices from making second-generation copies. RIAA lawyers are seeking a preliminary injunction to stop the Rio's launch, and there's a chance they'll get their way.

But whatever technical merits that the RIAA's case may have, it's kind of a weird one. The Rio isn't really a recording device, despite the RIAA's contention. The Rio could in some strict sense be considered a copying device, but in fact nobody's going to use it for anything but playback. Why bother? A computer hooked up to the Internet is already a much easier way of making and transferring copies of MP3 files. And a computer that's equipped with one of the increasingly popular CD-R drives (which can record audio CDs as well as software disks) is a much simpler solution to the problem of getting the music out of the PC and into more congenial settings.

The RIAA is also cracking down on student music traders. On October 13th, a student-run site called the Cure MP3 Audio Archive was shut down by Case Western Reserve University, reportedly under pressure from the RIAA. The site had featured some 750 live cuts and had been frequented by hundreds of visitors, who downloaded MP3 recordings instead of buying bootleg CDs.

The biggest legitimate MP3 Web site, MP3.com, draws more than 100,000 visitors every day. Each month, more than 2 million songs are legally downloaded from the site.

Hundreds of thousands of songs in MP3 files have been illegally traded. In one afternoon alone, RIAA found eighty sites containing more than 20,000 MP3 files, virtually all of which were unlicensed. But RIAA's central claim that there would be no market for the Rio if it weren't for "the thousands and thousands of illicit songs on the Internet" is fast becoming a very tough case to make. The number of legitimate MP3 sites is growing, and the biggest of them, MP3.com, draws more than 100,000 visitors every day. Surfers can take their pick of about 3,000 legally downloadable songs, the vast majority of them by undiscovered garage bands and garret troubadours looking to ride the format's popularity to a good old-fashioned record deal. Meanwhile, ex-Pixie Frank Black has gone the opposite route. He has signed a hybrid CD-MP3 distribution deal with GoodNoise, which calls itself an "Internet record company" and sells Black's latest album online at ninety-nine cents a cut and $8.99 for the whole album.

By now, even major record companies have made tentative forays into licensed MP3 distribution. Late in July, Disney-owned Hollywood Records took a single by the newly signed swing band Alien Fashion Show and set it loose on the kosher MP3 sites, racking up some 40,000 downloads and some valuable buzz. In October, the Beastie Boys, with the blessings of their label, Capitol, began posting MP3 remixes and live cuts on the Web free of charge and saw one of them rocket to the top of MP3.com's download charts. These ventures haven't exactly unleashed a flood of imitators, but it's hard

LEN IRISH/OUTLINE

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AMD K6 2 3DNow!

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with 3DNow! Technology

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to imagine that other major labels won't sooner or later be following suit.

Record executives aren't stupid, after all. Successful new formats always provide record companies a welcome chance to breathe new shelf life into aging catalogs. And an Internet-ready format, with its automatic entree to a high-speed, low-overhead distribution system, has a charm all its own. The magic concept here is "frictionless markets" – a bits-only vision of superefficient commerce, long promoted by cyberfuturists. MP3 is an almost flawless demonstration of the concept, fully functional except for one glaring omission: As Mike Edwards of the London-based International Federation of the Phonographic Industry puts it, "They've built the supermarket without the checkout counter."

record industry seems convinced that a copy-protected format will eventually prevail. Says RIAA spokesperson Tim Sites, "Technology will solve the problems that technology has created."

That's called whistling in the dark, by the way. What Sites' mantra leaves unsaid is that the moment the industry bit the apple of digital technology (otherwise known as CDs), it was no longer really selling records – it was selling software. And if the history of the software business teaches us anything, it's that the dream of copy protection is just that: a dream. For years, computer-software makers experimented with a variety of copy-protection mechanisms, trying desperately to come up with a scheme that consumers would put up with, but in the end they admitted defeat. Copy protection just adds friction to a product whose chief value is its frictionlessness. It's like adding sand to mayonnaise.

MP3.com president and CEO Michael Robertson envisions an Internet clearinghouse where you could "get any song in the world for twenty-five cents each."



Left: Swing band Alien Fashion Show has racked up 40,000 downloads. Right: Ex-Pixie Frank Black signed a new hybrid CD-MP3 distribution deal.

Not surprisingly, well-paid minds are already hard at work getting those counters installed. Copy-protected alternatives to MP3 have been introduced – clever formats with built-in anti-piracy mechanisms to help keep songs from spreading beyond the hands of their purchasers. The Liquid Audio format, for instance, is already being used to sell records on music sites like N2K and the Internet Underground Music Archives. And high-powered AT&T Labs is pushing a similarly protected scheme called a2b. Neither of these formats can boast anywhere near as many users, probably because they are available at their designated sites only. MP3, by contrast, is an open international standard. Forrester Research estimates that at least 5 million people worldwide are active MP3 users, and Microsoft has incorporated MP3 into the Windows Media Player. The phrase *MP3* is now reported to rank second only to *sex* among terms most entered into online search engines, but the

And so the software industry has had to learn to live with a certain amount of piracy – and it does so now quite profitably, thanks. Which is why most MP3 advocates think record companies are shooting themselves in the foot if they hold out for technological solutions to the problem. Among the prerequisites for successfully selling music on the Internet, says MP3.com's president and CEO, Michael Robertson, "is the realization that piracy is part of the equation." Some music fans will always copy songs illegally, the reasoning goes, but if you make it easy enough for them to pay for music on the Net, the majority of them will.

How easy is easy enough? Well, compared with the tedium of trolling through chat rooms and scouring randomly functional Web sites for that new Frank Black single, the ease of going straight to the reliable GoodNoise site to download it seems well worth the ninety-nine cents that the site charges. Once licensing protocols and online micropayment systems are worked out, Robertson envisions a single Internet clearinghouse "where you could just go and . . . get any song in the world for twenty-five cents each."

Beyond that, some industry watchers foresee a future in which network connections are so speedy and ubiquitous that no one will even bother with the hassle of downloading. You'll simply ask for the song and it will arrive, paid for upfront through a subscription fee or the hidden sales tax of advertising – pretty much the way you pay for television.

"We're moving toward a world where you can have all the zeros and ones you want, wherever you are and whenever you want them," says Jim Griffin, formerly director of technology for Geffen Records and now CEO of the One-House consultancy. "And if you live in a world like that, why would you carry your zeros and ones around?" Which means, of course, that by then the record industry as we have known it will have



ceased to exist. From the wax cylinder to the vinyl disc to the golden $15.99 CD, some solid round object or another has always stood at the heart of the industry's business model. No wonder the business is scared. It's going to have to reinvent itself from the ground up, and that process is going to be a painful one.

And isn't it worth asking whether this transition will be painful for the rest of us, too? Our feelings about music have revolved around those solid round objects as much as the industry's spreadsheets and marketing plans have. The heft of them in our hands, the look of them lined up on our shelves or scattered on our floors – in our hearts, these things are often wedded to the songs as much as melody and lyrics. Will we miss all this when records are gone? Will we have it in us to let them go?

For the time being, these are fairly abstract questions, and for most of us they'll probably remain so for a while yet. Unless you're lucky enough to live in a college dorm room or a town wired for cable modems, you probably don't have an Internet connection fast enough to make downloading MP3s but a time-consuming curiosity. And even once the neighborhoods of America are fitted with fat digital pipes from coast to coast, it will no doubt be a couple of years at least before records are finally pushed to the margins of the music economy.

But talk to the denizens of MP3_Central and you will get a keyhole glimpse of a world where records are already fading into obsolescence. Talk to the Midwesterner who calls himself MrPaul and says that he stopped listening to CDs "because I'm a poor college kid who had a choice between a nice computer or a stereo"; he messaged the channel recently, offering to upload his entire ten-hour collection of pop songs to the first taker "because I have gotten a lot of MP3 from the channel and . . . [wanted] to be nice to someone in return." Or talk to Mulva, a forty-eight-year-old dad and retired military man with an East Texas accent who spends his evenings passing out Van Morrison songs like candy and who, for himself, mostly just downloads cuts from CDs that his kids want for Christmas, "to see if they're really trash-mouth or what."

These are the pirates who haunt the record industry's collective unconscious – the Robin Hooded hacker revolutionaries of its nightmares. But if you talk to them, they don't seem very revolutionary at all. What they seem like, really, are ordinary music consumers given a not-so-ordinary opportunity: to feel their way out of the orbit of the solid round object toward a form that might just be a closer fit to the way people actually relate to music. And when the revolution really comes – when the record industry finally reinvents itself as a business attuned to the fluid economics of the digital – they'll probably be the first ones in line at the checkout counters. ◆

JULIAN DIBBELL's *"My Tiny Life" is forthcoming from Henry Holt in January.*

BOOKMARKS



KEVIN GRIFFIN

Better Than Ezra

www.slugfest.kaizen.net I usually check out celebrity slugfests. That's something I do for fun. It's this thing with a Shockwave plug-in. *www.rollingstone.com* I have found myself squeamishly going here, or to any of the other music sites, because every once in a while I'll go to the bulletin boards and people write in "Top Ten bands that rule," "Top Ten bands that suck." And I'll double-click and just cross my fingers. I've been quite relieved.

Service providers You can categorize people by the Web service they use. If you're an elitist, you think AOL is pretty uncool. It's like listening to the Backstreet Boys. EarthLink would be, like, if you were into Elliott Smith. MindSpring would be if you only listened to Pavement or something like that. –L.G.

KEVIN MCVEY (ALIEN FASHION SHOW); STEPHEN STICKLER/OUTLINE (FRANK BLACK)



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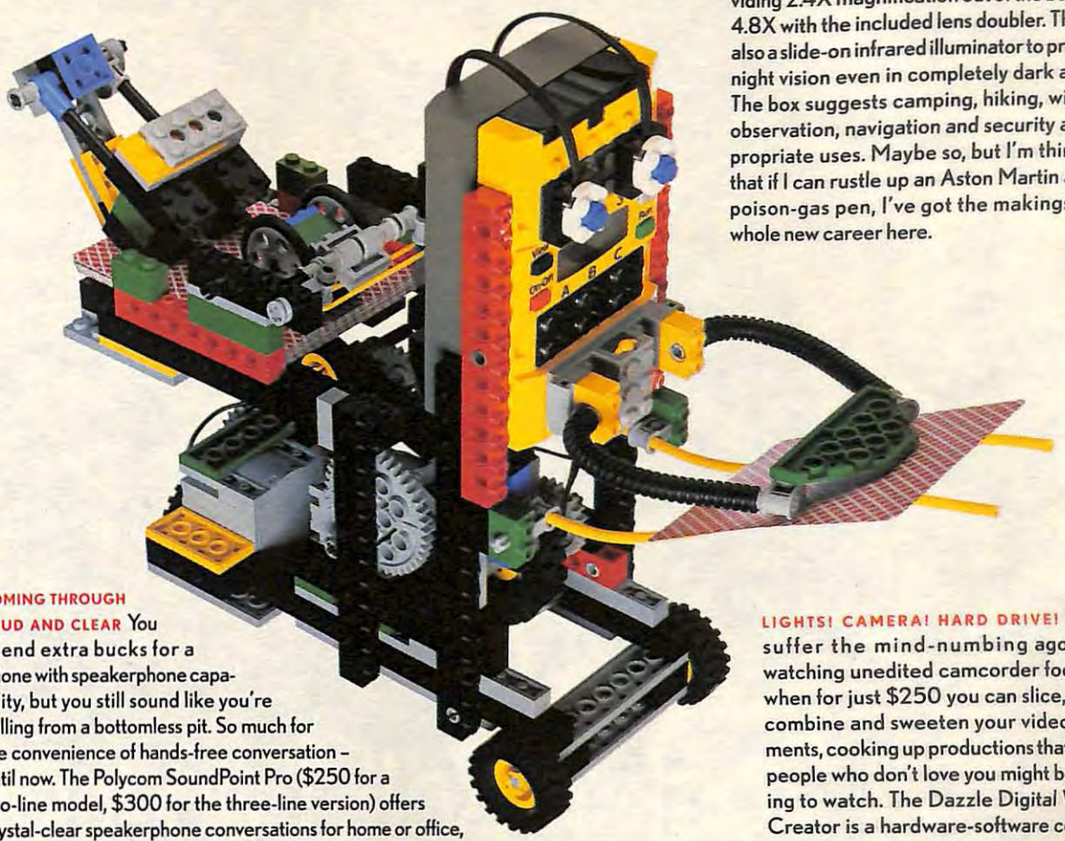
Hardware/Software

THE BEST NEW STUFF BY STEVE MORGENSTERN



BATTERY-POWERED BOOK The first practical electronic book – a computerized device that lets you download reading material – has arrived. The SoftBook, from SoftBook Press ($300, with a $20-per-month content subscription), displays one full page at a time on a crisp, high-resolution backlit screen. This self-contained unit has a built-in modem – just connect it to the phone line and dial in. The availability of content is the big question. SoftBook Press vows a wide-ranging downloadable library of books and periodicals, but those deals are still being done.

IT'S ALIVE! If there is a child in the vicinity, you have a perfect excuse to buy the Lego Mindstorms Robotics Invention System ($200). Designed in conjunction with the MIT Media Lab, it lets youngsters ages eleven and up create robots that freely zoom around, perform programmed actions and, best of all, react to their environment, thanks to sensors that detect light and motion. You'll find Mindstorms in the toy department, but it's serious fun for any gizmo-happy grown-up. You get a bright-yellow Lego computer module, PC software for programming your robot and enough motors, wheels, gears and Lego building blocks to construct truly awe-inspiring mechanized contraptions. They can follow lines on the ground, search for light sources, reorient themselves if they bump into things and much more.





BRING ON THE NIGHT With the Moonlight Products NV-100 Compact night-vision scope ($240), you, too, can enjoy a cool green and black view of objects in the darkness, just like you've seen in countless movies. The lightweight scope (just 1.9 pounds) nestles snugly in the palm of your hand, providing 2.4X magnification out of the box and 4.8X with the included lens doubler. There's also a slide-on infrared illuminator to provide night vision even in completely dark areas. The box suggests camping, hiking, wildlife observation, navigation and security as appropriate uses. Maybe so, but I'm thinking that if I can rustle up an Aston Martin and a poison-gas pen, I've got the makings of a whole new career here.



COMING THROUGH LOUD AND CLEAR You spend extra bucks for a phone with speakerphone capability, but you still sound like you're calling from a bottomless pit. So much for the convenience of hands-free conversation – until now. The Polycom SoundPoint Pro ($250 for a two-line model, $300 for the three-line version) offers crystal-clear speakerphone conversations for home or office, with built-in conference calling, Caller ID and speed dial. And the fact that it would look right at home on Darth Vader's office desk can only help enhance your sense of importance, whether you're ordering subordinates around or ordering a pizza.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! HARD DRIVE! Why suffer the mind-numbing agony of watching unedited camcorder footage when for just $250 you can slice, dice, combine and sweeten your video segments, cooking up productions that even people who don't love you might be willing to watch. The Dazzle Digital Video Creator is a hardware-software combo for PCs, providing all the video-capturing and editing capability you need. Create images for the Internet and e-mail and computer presentations or even output back to videotape.

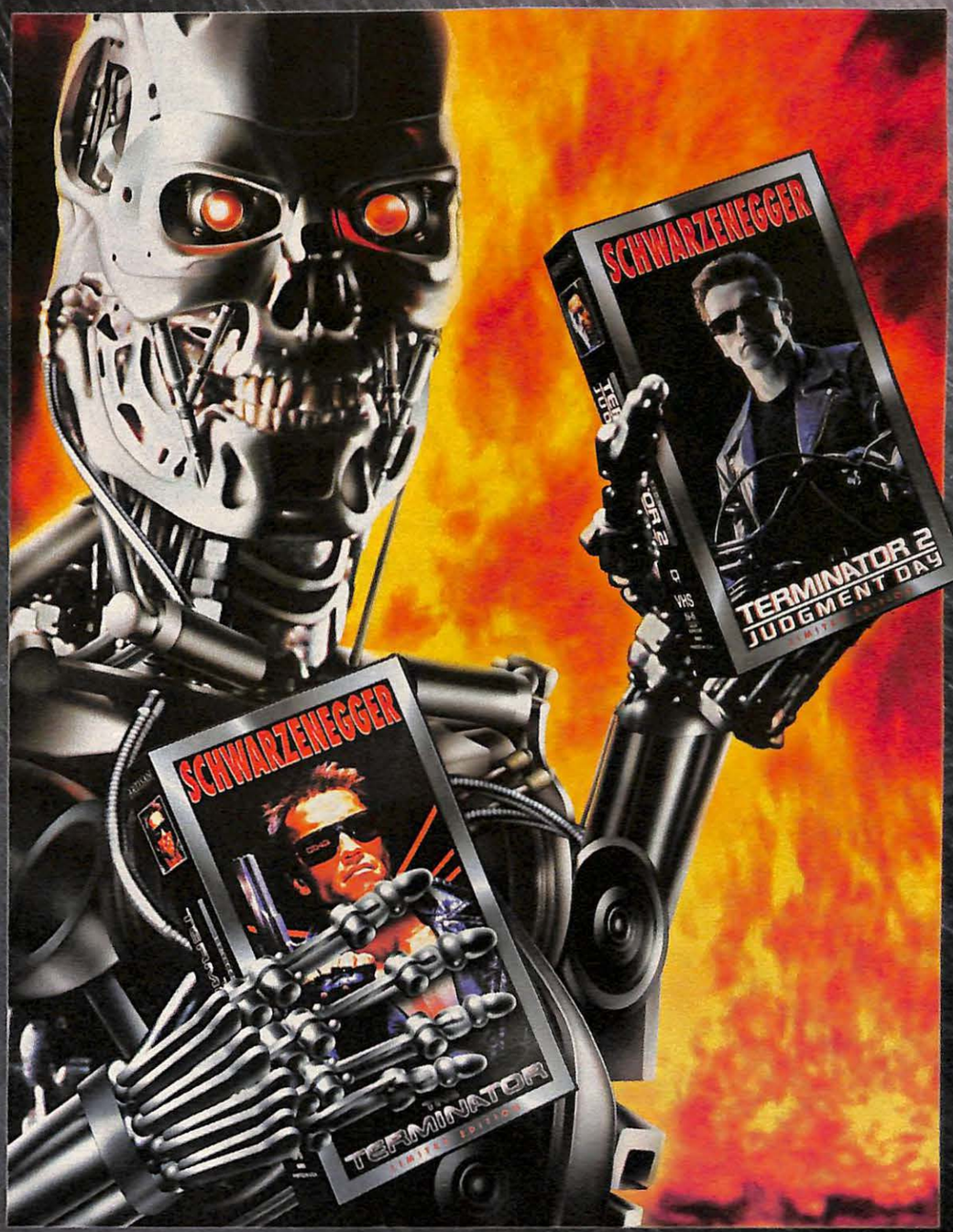


GOOD-LOOKING SOUNDS If you're ready to join the minidisc music movement, the Sharp MD-MS702 player-recorder ($400) combines sensational looks with terrific sound in an ultracompact package. It's like having a recording studio in your pocket producing discs that sound as good as those recorded with full-size minidisc components. With a long-lasting lithium-ion rechargeable battery, digital bass boost, a convenient front-loading design and a handsome, illuminated remote control, the MS702 is a stylish, practical way to roll your own music discs. And by switching to mono recording mode, you can fit more than two hours on a single disc – a perfect solution for recording classes or meetings.



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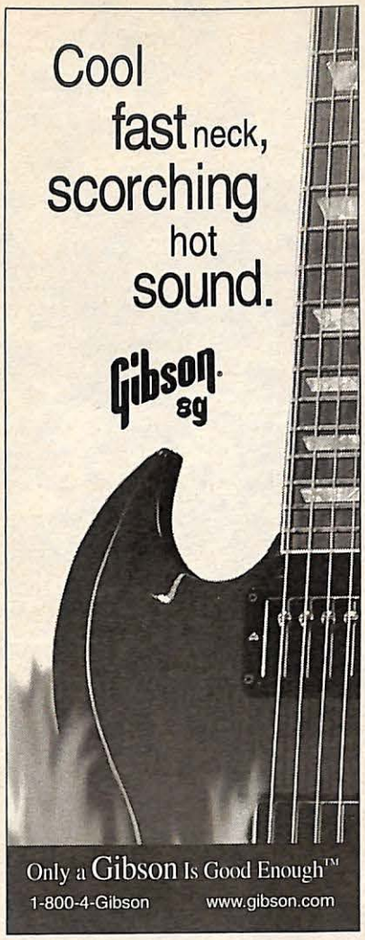
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VIDEOPHONE HOME With its built-in LCD monitor, the Via-TV VC150 Desktop Videophone ($650), from 8x8 Inc., goes anywhere there's a touch-tone phone. Most videophones have to be connected to either a computer or a TV set. But installation of this videophone couldn't be simpler: Just plug it into the wall jack. While videophone picture quality over ordinary phone lines is still less than optimal, this picture actually looks better on the four-inch-by-four-inch LCD screen than it does blown up on a full-size TV.

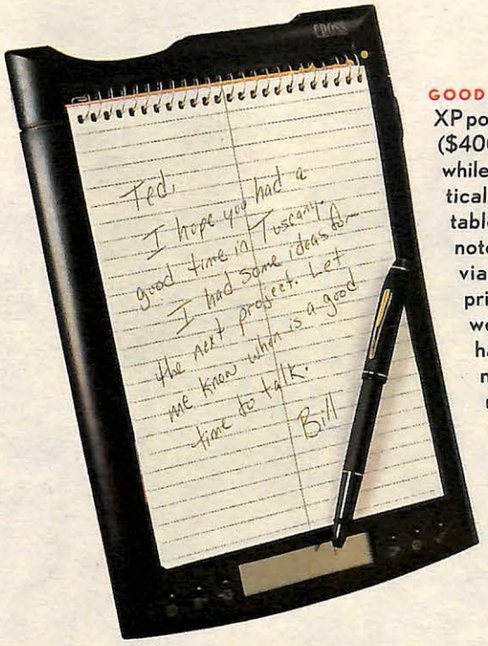




BODY ENGLISH SPOKEN HERE Microsoft's SideWinder Freestyle Pro ($75) takes PC game control beyond same-old button pushing and joystick wiggling. Grab the controller, tip it forward and you are accelerating. Tip it back to brake; tilt left and right for side-to-side zigging and zagging. With this controller, flying through the air or zooming down the highway by twisting and turning feels completely natural (just try the included Motocross Madness motorcycle-racing game and you'll get it immediately). And for games where buttons are a better choice, it's easy to switch back to standard game-pad mode. The Freestyle Pro fits the hands well – it's large and solid enough to be comfortable without being oversize and unwieldy – and can be connected via either a standard joystick port or a handy USB port (under Windows 98).

GRAND DIGITAL CAMCORDER Until recently, digital camcorders offered lots more resolution for lots more money than conventional camcorders. That price gap is starting to narrow, and Canon is leading the way by breaking the $1,000 barrier with its Canon ZR model. This isn't a cut-rate camera by any stretch of the imagination – in fact, it was introduced just months ago at $2,000 and won widespread praise at that price for its design and superb video quality. You get an 11X optical zoom lens (44X with digital enhancement), a crisp 2.5-inch LCD screen and an IEEE 1394 digital-output port for editing your footage with a PC or a Macintosh.





GOOD NEWS, PAD NEWS The CrossPad XP portable digital note pad, from Cross ($400), lets you write with ink on paper while at the same time storing an identical digital version in the electronic tablet underneath. Your "digital ink" notes can then be uploaded to a PC via serial cable for editing, filing, printing or e-mailing. The XP tablet weighs a reasonable pound and a half and comes with a six-inch-by-nine-inch paper pad and enough memory to store at least eighty pages of notes. An eight-inch-by-ten-inch CrossPad is also available, but I prefer the smaller XP model for taking notes, jotting down phone messages or sketching e-mailable doodles.

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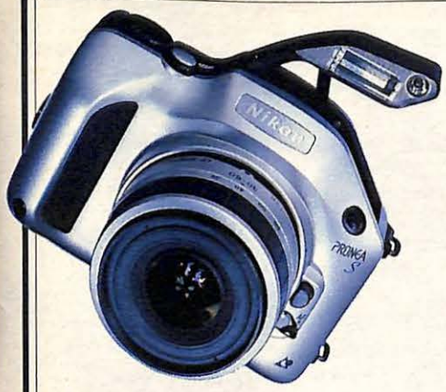
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JUST SHOOT ME Are you disappointed by your compact-camera results but put off by the complexity, size and expense of a 35 mm SLR? Then the Nikon Pronea S is for you. Its innovative design combines SLR flexibility with state-of-the-art, user-friendly automation. The Pronea S ($400) uses Advanced Photo System film, offering foolproof drop-in loading and the choice of three picture formats. The Pronea S is significantly smaller than most SLRs (at just a pound, with a 30 mm to 60 mm zoom lens) and accepts hundreds of standard Nikon lenses, offering the opportunity to increase your creative options later on.



TRAVELS WITH MY ANT The Gateway FireAnt (a.k.a. the Solo 3100) is a five-pound powerhouse that delivers all the computer you need for work or play in a handsome, compact package. The lightest DVD-equipped portable on the market, the Gateway FireAnt is nicely outfitted (a 233-MHz Pentium II processor, 32MB of RAM, a 12.1-inch TFT screen, a built-in 56K modem and a DVD-ROM drive) for a very reasonable $2,500. With its large screen and full-size keyboard, the FireAnt is a solid choice as a desktop replacement system, as well as a very portable portable. And there's a bonus when you're at home, too: The computer's DVD player can easily be connected to a TV for full-screen viewing pleasure.

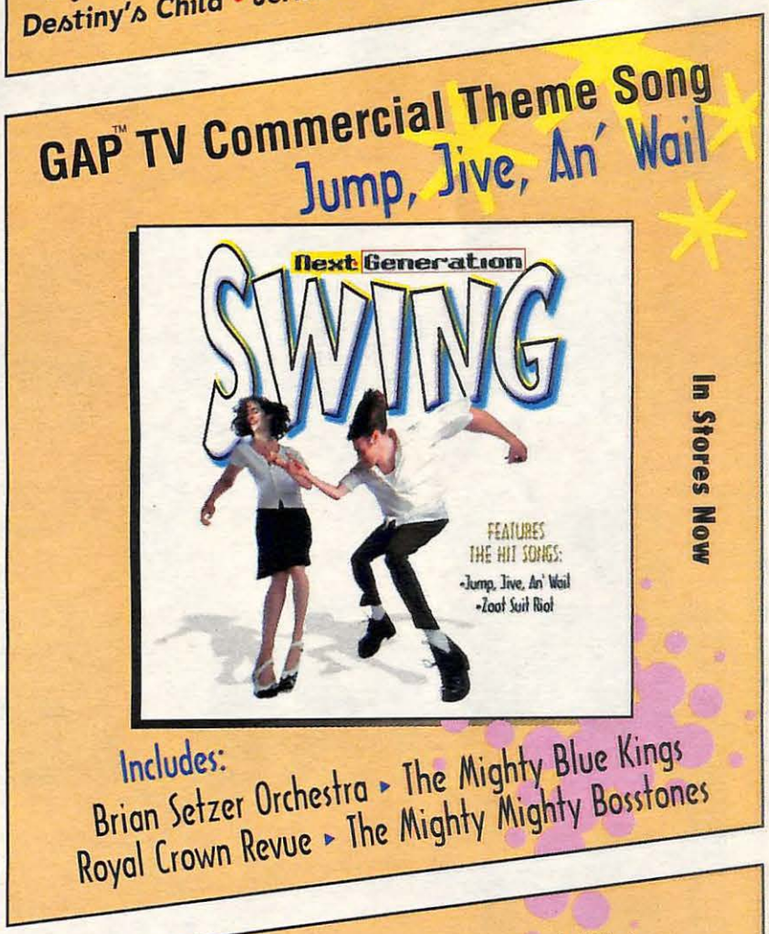


PAGE - OR JIMMY PAGE? One guy's annoying pager alert goes *boop, boop, boop.* Another's bleeps forty times a minute. And yours? It plays "Stairway to Heaven" or "Satisfaction" or pretty much whatever you'd like to hear – if you're carrying a Philips pager with the new melody-maker feature. The Fiori 1F1 ($90) lets you input up to nine notes and program the pitch and note duration. The pager holds up to eighteen melodies at once, so you can switch the alert song to fit your mood.

PRIMO RADIO Until recently, shopping for a compact table-top radio with premium-quality, room-filling sound meant choosing between the $350 Bose Wave Radio and... well, that was pretty much it. Now, Cambridge SoundWorks is offering an attractive alternative with its $200 Model 88 AM/FM stereo table radio. The Model 88 is a modest 14 inches wide by 4.75 inches high by 8 inches deep, yet it produces rich, impressive sound. The key is a powerful built-in subwoofer that adds dramatic bass. The Model 88 includes two input jacks to connect outside audio sources, such as portable CD players or even your computer's sound output. You also get a lightweight, palm-size wireless remote. What's missing is a clock-radio mode, though the company promises that a separate alarm-clock module will be available soon. ◆









Choosing the Best Speakers for Your Computer

SOUND OPTIONS IN THREE PRICE RANGES

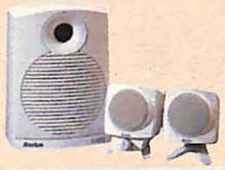
BY STEVE MORGENSTERN

WE'RE SPENDING MORE AND MORE time listening intently to our computers – grabbing music off the Web, popping CDs and DVDs into the drive tray, using TV-tuner cards, even letting the PC take our phone messages. Too bad so many computers look great and sound lousy.

One route to improving PC audio is upgrading your sound card. The latest sound cards deliver amazing virtual 3-D support, multilayered sound effects, realistic-sounding synthesized music and, in some cases, support for four discrete audio channels (two front, two rear). For most of us, though, the weakest link in the auditory chain isn't the sound card – it's the crummy speakers that come with the computer.

But the good news is, it costs surprisingly little to move from mediocre speakers to a respectable setup.

Windows 98 users should consider USB (Universal Serial Bus) speakers, which are now starting to hit the shelves. Connecting speakers directly to the USB port instead of to an internal sound card theoretically produces cleaner sound, since the port is immune from distortion caused by electromagnetic noise inside the PC case. We've only noticed a major improvement when connecting USB speakers to laptop computers, which are notoriously ill-equipped for high-quality audio. If your laptop serves as a home-and-away machine, USB speakers are a sound choice. ◆

	PRODUCT	PRICE	INPUTS	DESIGN	CONTROLS	NOTES	CONTACT INFO
LOW $	 Boston Acoustics BA635	$100	One audio input	Two small satellites, plus subwoofer	Volume on satellite, bass on subwoofer	The strong, clear sound is nothing short of amazing. Music sounds very crisp, favoring the high end, but this gives CDs an enjoyable live quality. The satellite minis deliver enough undistorted volume to fill a small bedroom.	877-333-4001; *www.bostonacoustics.com*
LOW $	Cambridge SoundWorks PC Works FourPointSurround 	$100	Four inputs: left and right, front and rear channels	Four small satellites, plus subwoofer; tripod stands for rear satellites	Wired volume control, bass on subwoofer	Enjoying four-channel output from a suitably equipped sound card is a bargain with this system. The sound quality is surprisingly rich, though there's only enough volume for one person to listen and a slight hiss at peak volume.	800-367-4434; *www.hifi.com*
LOW $	 Labtec LCS-2632	$100	One audio input, plus microphone	Two medium-size satellites, plus subwoofer with headphone jack	Volume, treble, bass, 3-D surround and mute on subwoofer	A good choice for enjoying movies or playing games, with a decent 3-D surround effect. Sound coverage is broader and deeper than that in the smaller satellite systems, with plenty of volume for group listening.	360-896-2000; *www.labtec.com*
MEDIUM $	Altec Lansing ADA-70 	$150	One USB port, two auxiliary audio inputs	Two medium-size satellites, plus subwoofer	Volume, treble and bass via software or controls on satellite	This system delivers crystal-clear sound from any source and is quite good at isolating dialogue in movies and games. The subwoofer is powerful but could use more volume from the satellites – a one-person-at-the-keyboard system.	800-258-3288; *www.altecmm.com*
MEDIUM $	 Advent AV390PL	$180	One audio input	Two substantial wedge-shaped satellites (one with headphone jack), plus subwoofer	Volume, treble, mute, Digital Signal Processing, bass level on subwoofer	The Gaming Contour Control, which tunes bass response for games (lots of boom) and music (deeper and subtler), gives this setup flexibility, while the Dolby Digital Surround system adds clarity and depth.	800-732-6866; *www.poweredpartners.com*
HIGH $	Sonigistix Monsoon MM-1000 	$230	Two audio inputs	Unusual four-by-eight-inch flat-panel satellites, plus subwoofer	Volume and mute on wired control, bass level and bass boost on subwoofer	The flat-panel satellites (less than an inch thick) use newly affordable technology that's highly directional and sonically precise (good for surround-sound effects for single users). A music lover's dream come true.	604-271-2237; *www.monsoonpower.com*
HIGH $	 Microsoft Digital Sound System 80	$260	One USB port, one auxiliary audio input	Two satellites, plus subwoofer	Volume, mute and subwoofer on satellite	Microsoft's first foray into speakers is impressive, if pricey. The hefty down-firing subwoofer adds plenty of bass oomph to games without getting boomy on music or movies.	425-882-8080; *www.microsoft.com*
HIGH $	Boston Acoustics Media Theater 	$300	One audio input	Two substantial satellites (one with headphone jack), plus subwoofer	Volume, virtual surround level and bass on satellite	An ideal system for computer-based moviegoers, with the best virtual Dolby ProLogic effects and a superb subwoofer. For an extra $100 you can add a separate surround unit behind the listener.	877-333-4001; *www.bostonacoustics.com*

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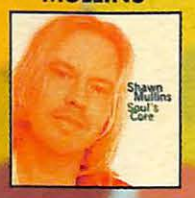
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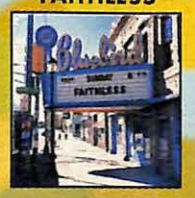
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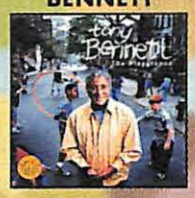
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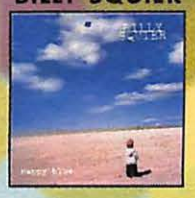
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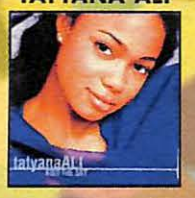
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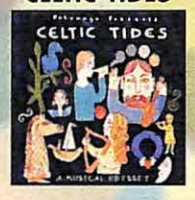
LIZ PHAIR



DJ SPOOKY



CELTIC TIDES



RIALTO



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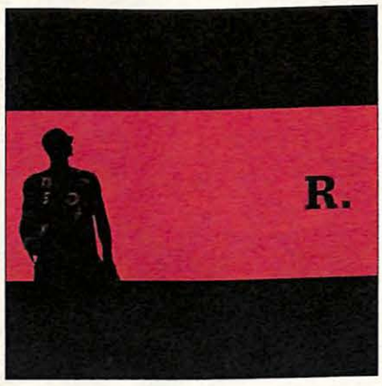
NO MUSIC, NO LIFE.

HOLY HIGH ROLLERS

RECORDINGS

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

Soul god R. Kelly lets the Lord into his bedroom; godly soul Kirk Franklin lets hip-hop into his church



★★★★

R.

R. Kelly

JIVE

★★★

THE NU NATION PROJECT

Kirk Franklin

GOSPO CENTRIC/INTERSCOPE

EVER SINCE RAY CHARLES wailed the sanctified booty call of "I Got a Woman," gospel has been a volatile part of black pop. An R&B bump-and-grind man like R. Kelly can try his hand at gospel moves – even sneaking the line "leaning on the everlasting arms" into the theme for a Bugs Bunny movie – while minister Kirk Franklin works the other side of the street, taking his spiritual jones into funky territory. Franklin made noise last year on the God's Property smash "Stomp," bellowing preacherly invocations while a choir sang hooks from an old disco hit or two. His fourth album, *The Nu Nation Project*, is the big payback: After decades of soul singers and rappers borrowing church flava, Franklin calls in the IOUs for his hip-hop gospel.

Nu Nation gets pop juice from R. Kelly, Mary J. Blige and Bono, all of whom guest on the ballad "Lean on Me." But Franklin is the real star here, sampling P-Funk, rewriting Bill Withers' "Lovely Day" and just getting his praise on. He

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revisits the hip-hop boom of "Stomp" in "Revolution" and "Praise Joint"; meanwhile, "Something About the Name Jesus" offers more trad, down-home harmonizing. Franklin raps, sings, produces and generally moguls around. (He even has a new book, *Church Boy*, somewhat quizzically billed as his "only authorized autobiography.") *Nu Nation* gets an amen for trashing musical boundaries, and it sure has a catchier beat than Marilyn Manson.

R. Kelly puts a lot of church into his music – even in salacious ballads like "Half on a Baby" – and that's just part of his always-wearing-shades allure. The mystery man spends his excellent double album, *R.*, proving that he can do it all: He rhymes with Jay-Z and Foxy Brown; he croons with Celine Dion; he goofs on tango and opera; he speaks fluent pillow talk in every pop dialect. *R.* gets the party started with "Home Alone," which features rapper Keith Murray, Sugarhill sound effects and *Off the Wall*-style disco guitar as Kelly voices his intention to "freak you to the floor." But he also scores in smooch ballads like "Get Up on a Room," whispering, "Baby . . . we're both just sittin' here . . . we need to get somewhere . . . *private*" until you're ready to toss him the keys. He also tries his hand at yodeling, for reasons known only to the man called R. himself.

Once upon a time, Kelly's productions for other singers, such as Aaliyah and Changing Faces, were inevitably livelier than his own records, but success seems to have fired up his brilliance – you take the R. Kelly who sings the drippy ballads and the R. Kelly who rides his pony through the funk jams and you've got two of the most lethal musicians on the planet. His overly Mase-style rapping aside, Kelly covers every base: beats, melodies, vocals, production, enigmatic-bald-guy cool, lyrics. Yes, lyrics – Kelly faces up to the bleak conscience of a do-wrong man in confessions that put Elvis Costello to shame, especially in "One Man," "When a Woman's Fed Up" and "Down Low Double Life." You can hear that Kelly really does believe in sin, and that gives him moral weight in gospel moves like "If I Could Turn Back the Hands of Time."

Every guest star who enters Kelly's parlor emerges better for the experience – even Celine Dion, the human anti-NAFTA petition whose dancing on the VH1 *Divas* special cried out for stricter work-visa controls. And he tops it all with "I Believe I Can Fly," a modern standard so ruthlessly inspirational, it makes "The Greatest Love of All" sound like "Welcome to the Jungle." For the five minutes of "I Believe," you hear seasons change, tides turn and colts grow into stallions; Dorothy returns to Kansas, Moses beholds the Promised Land, Babar is crowned king of the elephants, Aeneas reaches Rome. There's no point getting sick of the song now, since you'll be hearing it in commercials, grade-school talent shows, figure-skating exhibitions and Very Special Episodes for the rest of your born days. It sums up R. Kelly's fulsome pop outreach – like his man Kirk Franklin, he wants to sing the sacred, but he doesn't sleep on the profane. At heart, R. Kelly really just wants it all, and he gets all his fascinating musical and spiritual contradictions together on *R.*, suffering for his sins and savoring every minute of it. ◆

RECORD RATINGS

★★★★★ CLASSIC
★★★★ EXCELLENT
★★★ GOOD
★★ FAIR
★ POOR

Ratings are supervised by the "Rolling Stone" editors.



★★★★
NO SECURITY
The Rolling Stones
VIRGIN

IN THE NINETIES, THE ROLLING Stones have marked the end of each of their colossal world tours with a live album. The twist on *No Security*, the band's third caught-in-the-act collection this decade, is the way that everything – from golden oldies to midcareer hits to selections from *Bridges to Babylon*, the last studio album – becomes more vital under the heavy lights of the big live rig. The Stones are experts at making more recent material sound as important as their warhorses: *Bridges'* "Out of Control" acquires a menacing swagger, while "Saint of Me" blossoms, approaching the vitriolic intensity of *Exile on Main Street*. It's rare enough that the Rolling Stones share the stage with anyone, and there are some inspired cameos here: Taj Mahal enlivens "Corinna," Dave Matthews injects new, bittersweet sorrow into "Memory Motel," and saxophonist Joshua Redman soars through "Waiting on a Friend." But what's most impressive is the consistency with which the rhythm section, ever mindful of the groove fundamentals, cranks it up. The elemental *No Security* kind of makes you wonder whether the Stones shouldn't reverse their recent strategy and hit the stage first. –TOM MOON

BECK'S SMALL CHANGE



★★★★
MUTATIONS
Beck
DGC

LET'S CALL THIS SONG "WHERE IT'S NOT": "There is no one, nothing to see," sings Beck. "The night is useless, and so are we." "Night birds will cackle," he intones on another track, "rotting like apples on trees." The twenty-eight-year-old Beck Hansen's new album, *Mutations*, brims with death, decay and decrepitude. But in its own peculiar way, it's also his prettiest record to date.

On *Mutations* – recorded in two weeks last spring – Beck stops talking down to his tuneful side. Compared with the funk collage of 1996's *Odelay* or the raw anti-folk of 1994's *One Foot in the Grave*, this is an album of comfort songs. Assisted by Nigel Godrich (who co-produced Radiohead's *OK Computer*), Beck finally gives his melodies – some of them, like "Cancelled Check" and "Static," as old as his first demo tapes – the full studio treatment, letting them seep into pellucid Sixties folk-pop arrangements.

The most gorgeous example of this is "Nobody's Fault but My Own," a wise, dreamy song traced by sitars and strings arranged by Beck's father, David Campbell. "When the moon is a counterfeit," sings Beck, "better find the one that fits/Better find the one that lights the way for you." It sounds like he's singing about a bad relationship, but he might as well be delivering a personal manifesto; he's doffed the rhinestone suit and James Brown schtick for a new costume.

Mutations is a highly mannered album that references vintage psychedelic folk and rock as overtly as *Odelay* sampled Schubert. "Lazy Flies" has the same arch, carousel-like tone as the Beatles' "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite"; "Bottle of Blues" rolls along like the Kinks at their *Muswell Hillbillies* rootsiest. The album's affectations can be overpowering: "Lazy Flies" is a Hieronymus Bosch painting populated by "dead horses" and "shadows of sulphur." "We Live Again" is comically dreary; "Oh, I grow weary of the end," Beck moans. Amid the track's harpsichords and elevator-music slothfulness, Beck's insincerity – which we can forgive or enjoy in other contexts – doesn't quite fit; it seems a bit cold and removed.

But even if he doesn't find exactly the right pitch every time, Beck has entered his prime as a songwriter, which is exciting. Few lyricists of his generation are coming up with lines as good as "Doldrums are pounding/Cheapskates are clowning this town" ("Dead Melodies"). It's also a testament to his talent that he has so effortlessly assimilated bossa nova into his repertoire, as he did last year on the single "Deadweight" and as he does here with the wonderful "Tropicalia," a tribute to the progressive Brazilian music of the same name from the Sixties and Seventies. Like Brazilian musicians such as Caetano Veloso and Jorge Ben (who was sampled on "Deadweight"), Beck is a singer-songwriter with a sophisticated sense of rhythm. Here, a silvery, uplifting groove brings to life a macabre carnival in which "tourists snore and decay" and people "dance in a reptile blaze."

It's that combination of the straightforward and the surreal that Beck has always pursued, and on *Mutations* he's found some kind of balance. Like the blues singer he once wanted to be, he broods, moans and frets – but there's joy in the music. –NATHAN BRACKETT

★★½
KEEP THE FAITH
Faith Evans
BAD BOY/ARISTA

IN INTERVIEWS, FAITH EVANS IS earthy, candid, fearless – real. Those same qualities, which powerfully illuminate her singing voice, are also the reason that her 1995 debut album clicked so hard with hip-hopheads. Though *Faith* didn't make a huge impact on the pop charts, the singer's church-girl vocals and smooth-not-slick R&B grooves made her a bona fide urban-world diva. Caught in the swirls of controversy surrounding the alleged Death Row/Bad Boy feud, Evans was introduced to the mainstream for all the wrong reasons after the deaths of Tupac Shakur and her estranged husband, the Notorious B.I.G. *Keep the Faith* is the album meant to rectify that, to remind folks that Faith (unlike most of her contemporaries) can actually sing her ass off.



THE CARDIGANS' PUPPY-LOVE TRAVAILS ALWAYS HAD A HINT OF MASOCHISM BENEATH THEM.

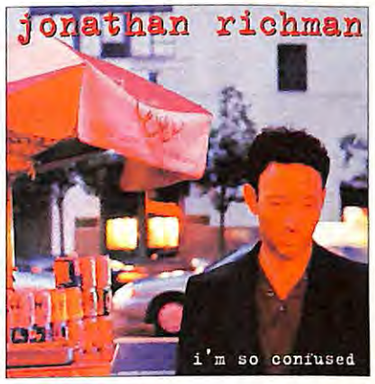
If only the album had tunes worthy of her talent. Too many ballads bleed into one another, with their overproduced overdubbed backing vocals making them almost indistinguishable. The high schoolish lyrics on tracks like "Caramel Kisses" would make even teen queens Brandy and Monica gag – they're certainly a waste of Evans' emotional heft. The album's guilty pleasure, the power-pop ballad "Lately I," is the kind of song that once got Whitney Houston labeled as white-bread; Evans injects it with so much soul that you're swept up in the schmaltz. Of the three midtempo tracks, the best is the first single, "Love Like This," which is anchored by a sample of Chic's "Chic Cheer." Evans deserves to be known as more than the *femme fatale* in some bullshit hip-hop feud, and *Keep the Faith* is a strong reminder that she has the talent. All she lacks are the songs. **–ERNEST HARDY**



★★½
OK
Talvin Singh
ISLAND

WORLD MUSIC HAS SEEPED SO deeply into Western pop that we no longer hear it as an exotic, alien strain. That suits Talvin Singh, a blue-haired Briton alert to the ways in which the music of his Indian heritage has been watered down in the past by post-colonial tourists. A year after he assembled *Anokha: Soundz of the Asian Underground* – a vibrant sampler of tracks from the Anglo-Asian dance scene – Singh drops a debut solo album that is full of what he calls "deep, mad symbioses." *OK* is another stop on the journey that began in 1981 with David Byrne and Brian Eno's groundbreaking *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, a floating world of busy beats, trance-y drones and migrant melodies.

The trouble is, the album winds up suggesting that most disowned of music terms, jazz fusion. Unlike the more song-oriented music of Cornershop or Asian Dub Foundation, *OK*'s long pieces are too ambient, too close to the vaporousness of much New Age music. Driven by Singh's own tabla, the frenetic drum-and-bass beats anchor haunting flute lines and buzzing sitars but rarely push the music into surprising areas. "Traveller" tapers off into a sumptuous string passage, and the closing track, "Vikram the Vampire," roils into a massive attack of skittering break beats, but much of the album boils down to mere techno soup, diffuse future jazz that simply hangs in the air to no great purpose. *OK* is OK and no more. **–BARNEY HOSKYNS**



★★★½
I'M SO CONFUSED
Jonathan Richman
VAPOR

JONATHAN RICHMAN PERFECTED the geek-punk sound in the Seventies with the Modern Lovers, warbling garage-rock classics like "Roadrunner" and "Girl Friend" with an Everykid intensity that spawned today's deluge of sensitive indie troubadours. But while you're making out that thank-you note, give a listen to *I'm So Confused*.

Jojo became an unlikely scuzz-cinema icon this summer as the conscience of *There's Something About Mary*, and he has had the good manners to celebrate with his strongest album in years. Producer Ric Ocasek brings a little sonic candy-o to flesh out the songs (dig those New Wave synths), and since Richman needs help from his supporting players as much as the next rock & roll eccentric, the lively production keeps the beat moving while Richman plays a mean skiffle guitar and broods over lost love: "The night is still young/And the bed is still cold/And I'm tired of hanging around all alone." After a decade of drab, interchangeable records, it's a shock to hear Richman face up to adult loneliness with so much soul – in "Hello From Cupid," "The Night Is Still Young" and "I Can't Find My Best Friend," he really sounds like a forty-seven-year-old guy sleeping by himself and hating it. *I'm So Confused* delivers an emotional punch that nobody expected again from Jonathan Richman – probably not even Jonathan himself. **–ROB SHEFFIELD**

★★★
GRAN TURISMO
The Cardigans
MERCURY

THE CARDIGANS' EMBRACE OF bubblegum-pop values has always made room for a touch of perversion – and not just because they played lounge versions of Black Sabbath songs on their last two albums. In mining Sixties kitsch for its melodic potential on those earlier albums, the Cardigans were so happy it hurt; their puppy-love travails always had a hint of masochism running beneath them. On *Gran Turismo*, they give the irony an even harsher twist. Nina Persson still coos in a cotton-candy voice, but as disco drums churn on "My Favourite Game," she sings, "My heart is black/And my body is blue."

If once the band's songs fizzed like champagne bubbles, now there's a murky undertow. On "Marvel Hill," the bass rumble threatens to overwhelm Persson, who protests, "I don't need this"; machines grind like trash compactors on "Paralyzed"; and the watery guitar that introduces "Hanging Around" is eventually buried beneath boulder-size chunks of noise.

But the Cardigans are still at their best when trafficking in pleasant melodies with a subversive surprise tucked inside. They hit the mark on "Explode," which floats in on a cloud of lullaby chords. "Ease your trouble, we'll pay them double/Not to look at you for a while," Persson purrs. "Explode or



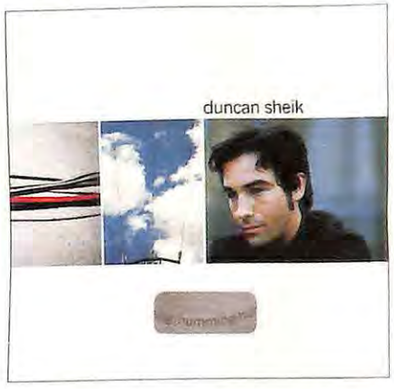
implode – we will take care of it." She sings like a guardian angel but talks like a hit man. **–GREG KOT**

★★★
HUMMING
Duncan Sheik
ATLANTIC

ON HIS 1996 DEBUT, DUNCAN Sheik played the pining lover in a soulless world. It was a pose that made for good melodrama at the expense of great art, bogging down the album with syrupy arrangements and narratives that bordered on maudlin.

Two years do make a difference. *Humming* finds its predecessor's woebegone crooner replaced by a philosophical singer-songwriter who now tempers his yearning sentiments with droll fatalism. "I feel a little undefined," Sheik confesses on "In Between," the album's opening track, ". . . like I'm returning/Most everything I bought."

The first album's hefty instrumentation has been pared down to a more conventional rock lineup, with piano and a string section tossed in for a flourish here and there. The first single, "Bite Your Tongue," is a driving hard-pop number whose lyrics, with their curt demand to cut the moping and get on with life, might well be addressing Sheik's earlier persona: "You're not the only one who's been let down/. . . Maybe it's



good for you to hit the ground."

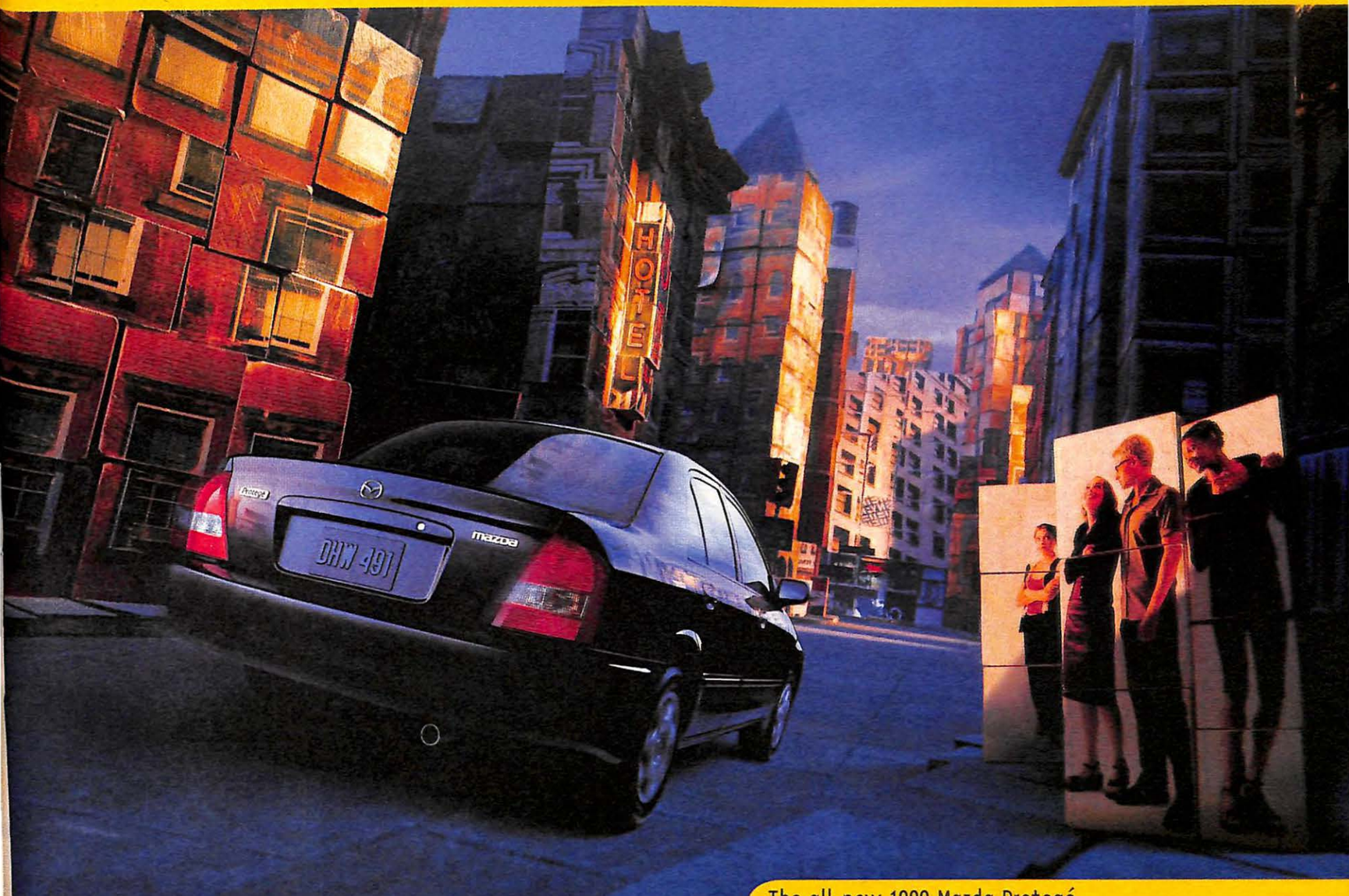
Sheik's best moments come on the meticulously structured slow numbers, especially "Everyone, Everywhere," which juxtaposes spare, ruminative verses with sweeping strings. The Duncan Sheik of *Humming* has lost interest in being a Byronic hero; and in sacrificing his hammy romanticism, he has become a more compelling songwriter. Because a disciplined craftsman is sexier than ten weepy artistes. **–NEVA CHONIN**

★★★½
PROLONGING THE MAGIC
Cake
CAPRICORN

LIKE BECK, SINGER JOHN MCCREA of Cake slings non sequiturs like a nouvelle cuisine short-order cook, offering images that can seem indulgent, if not pretentiously disconnected. "You twist the knife, then go home to kiss your wife," he sings on "You Turn the Screws" in a dry, David Byrne deadpan. "A bigger, better slice of what you like . . . flimsy as it is, it's open mike, punk rock/Red, white and blue."

Soon enough, though, "You Turn the Screws" coalesces into a sly commentary on greed and power. It's a diatribe disguised as gibberish, and that's the secret ingredient in the Cake mix. Throughout *Prolonging the Magic*, the band's third and sharpest album, this

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TOM ZÉ'S MOST MEMORABLE HOOK IS THE SOUND OF A RUBBER BALLOON ABRADING HIS TOOTH.

Sacramento, California, five-piece concocts silly little songs loaded with anything-but-silly subtexts. One minute McCrea is marveling at the honest work of tradesmen ("the barber can give you a haircut"), and in the next line, he's playing a tortured poet, declaring, "I don't wanna go to Sunset Strip, I don't wanna feel the emptiness" (on "Sheep Go to Heaven"). The music has enough range to accommodate these leaps – there are songs modeled after country weepers (the decidedly un-Bacharachian "Walk On By"), songs that echo the punch-line funk of Was (Not Was) and even a song that borrows its devotional theme from a gospel classic ("Hem of Your Garment"). And though the arrangements, which rely on Herb Alpert-like trumpet melodies and assorted other kitsch, are plenty smart, it's the wordplay that makes Cake less filling – but heavy. –TOM MOON



★★★★

FABRICATION DEFECT (COM DEFEITO DE FABRICAÇÃO)

Tom Zé

LUAKA BOP/WARNER BROS.

LONG BEFORE THE ADVENT OF samplers, Brazilian avant-Tropicalist Tom Zé was uniting seemingly opposed styles and constructing instruments from found objects – blenders, typewriters, floor polishers, doorbells. Inspired by Schönberg and samba and São Paulo's skyscrapers and slums, Zé (now sixty-two years old) dissected the metaphysics of everyday life with decomposed polyrhythms and satirical poetry that crossed lines of geography and history; in the process, he helped found Brazil's Tropicalia movement three decades ago.

Divided into fourteen so-called defects (only the second and last of which exceed four minutes), *Fabrication Defect (Com Defeito de Fabricação)* exhibits a symphonic precision rare in music of such percussive complexity. Voices imitate guitars when they're not imitating stumping politicians or drunken dere-



licts or *The Threepenny Opera*. The album's most memorable hook – bookending a five-minute *musique concrète* masterpiece called "Defect 14: Xiquexique" – is the sound of a rubber balloon abrading Zé's tooth.

Still, the mesh of orchestrated tapestries and cha-cha chorales is lovely. There's weird wit and warmth in how the mechanical ticktock of "Defect 8: Onu, Arma Mortal" and the sleepy dada noisescape of "Defect 4: Emerê" evolve out of the rain-forest-funk syncopation of "Defect 3: Politicar." For such a mad scientist, Zé sure does throw a sweet, sweaty street carnival. –CHUCK EDDY

★★★

SPIRIT TRAIL

Bruce Hornsby

RCA

BRUCE HORNSBY GETS SERIOUS on *Spirit Trail*, and – despite the idiotic cover photo of his uncle with a cigarette sticking out of his ear – Hornsby wants you to know it. Two CDs; twen-



ty songs; pages of lyrics on themes like race, religion, lost friendship and the American dream; busy virtuoso playing; titles like "Variations on Swan Song and Song D" – all of this screams Major Statement.

But subtlety, not screaming, is Hornsby's true talent. Predictably, then, he comes closest to achieving his ambitions when he strains the least to do so. He has rhythmic grace; a warm, soulful voice; and a gift for melodies that suggest both wistfulness and hope. On tracks like "Resting Place," "Line in the Dust" and the album's first single, "Great Divide," he trusts those virtues, and his message of tolerance comes across before you've even registered what he's singing about. His tribute to Jerry Garcia, "Sunflower Cat (Some Dour Cat) (Down With That)," which samples the guitar figure in the Dead's "China Cat Sunflower," is loving and fun in ways that perfectly suit its subject.

But all too often, Hornsby overplays his hand – more specifically, his piano (apparently, he has been practicing "three to five hours" a day) and his writing skills – and the excess notes and words amount to musical clutter. That baggage weighs listeners down as they move along *Spirit Trail* and conceals the one strong, articulate, cohesive album that lurks within this two-disc set. –ANTHONY DECURTIS

★★★½

PNYC

Portishead

FFRR/LONDON

THIS EXCEPTIONAL CONCERT RE-cording dramatizes how the musical goals that drive this Bristol, England, quartet eclipse anything as fleeting as trip-hop (that most stupid of Nineties pop coinages). Mostly recorded at New York's Roseland Ballroom on July 24th, 1997, these songs find the group's soprano center, Beth Gibbons, applying her featherweight gravity to subjects like love ("Only You"), time ("Humming") and loss ("Cowboys"). "It's left us chokin'," Gibbons observes on "Half Day Closing" as the music writhes and glides behind her. "Storm . . . in the morning light," Gibbons observes on the heartbreaking "Roads" (recorded this year in Norway), alone and "frozen."



Portishead's studio nuts and bolts disappear on *PNYC* as the band expands onstage with a brass quintet and a stylishly directed thirty-three-piece orchestra. Everything here attempts, and often ascends to, the noble flow of a symphony, a great guitar jam, an Aretha-led soul song. *PNYC* may be *Frampton Comes Alive!* for the high minded and black clad. It's also more than that. –JAMES HUNTER

★★★★

THE PERFECT BEATS: NEW YORK ELECTRO HIP-HOP AND UNDERGROUND DANCE CLASSICS 1980–1985: VOLS. 1–4

TIMBER!/TOMMY BOY

IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES, DISCO was gasping its last breath and electronic sounds from groups like Germany's Kraftwerk were filtering across the Atlantic Ocean, settling comfortably into the fecund black and Latino dance clubs located in urban centers like New York and Detroit. There, Euro grooves mingled with funk, jazz, R&B, hip-hop, and Latin rhythms and beats, resulting in a circular motion of creativity: Kraftwerk inspired New York's Afrika Bambaataa, who inspired a host of European music outfits, and so on. Timber!'s excellent four-volume compilation *The Perfect Beats: New York Electro Hip-hop and Underground Dance Classics 1980-1985* documents this cross-cultural



pollination. In addition to seminal works by Bambaataa ("Planet Rock," "Looking for the Perfect Beat") and Kraftwerk ("Trans Europe Express," "Numbers/Computer World"), tracks like the Peech Boys' landmark "Don't Make Me Wait," Heaven 17's wistful "Let Me Go," Shannon's "Let the Music Play" and Eddie Kendricks' meltingly romantic "Date With the Rain" reveal the depth and breadth of that era's international electro-dance movement. The discs also contain much of the source material for the samples and covers that fill today's premillennium airwaves – for example, Yello's "Bostich" provided the hook for Ruffneck's 1995 club smash, "Everybody Be Somebody," and Liquid Liquid's "Cavern" pulled similar duty for, first, Grandmaster Flash and Melle Mel's "White Lines" and then LL Cool J's 1997 single "Phenomenon." By the mid-Eighties,

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genre and identity splintering had set in (blame Reaganomics), and subgenres such as deep house, hardcore techno and progressive house were becoming rigidly defined. This collection celebrates a brief but vibrant stretch in contemporary music when it seemed that the perfect beat was at hand – and so was a boundary-free dance community. –ERNEST HARDY

★★
HARD TO SWALLOW
Vanilla Ice
REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL

FORGET THE TRUTH: IT'S THE music industry that's stranger than fiction. Example? How about a new Vanilla Ice record produced by Ross Robinson? That's right, the pale-skinned rapper who brought us "Ice Ice Baby" and the show-stopping "Ninja Rap," from *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze*, backed by the studio overseer of Korn and Limp Bizkit. It could be the unholiest alliance since Pat Boone started covering Metallica. And here's the freakiest thing: It isn't half-bad.

To be sure, this is no longer the pomp-padoured rapper your younger sister loved on 1990's *To the Extreme*. This is a pissed-off Ice, who screams, curses, bellows, howls and curses again. His newfound gravelly voice does some dance-hall riffing on "Living." On "Scars" he rages against his messed-up childhood; on "F--k Me" he lashes out at music critics, record companies and, yes, even himself.

Except for that, Ice doesn't have much to say. Thankfully, when the lyrical lulls arrive – and there are plenty – Robinson and crew are usually there to save the day. There's the guitar-drum interplay on "Zig Zag Stories," the metal funk of "S.N.A.F.U." and even a thrash reinterpretation of "Ice Ice

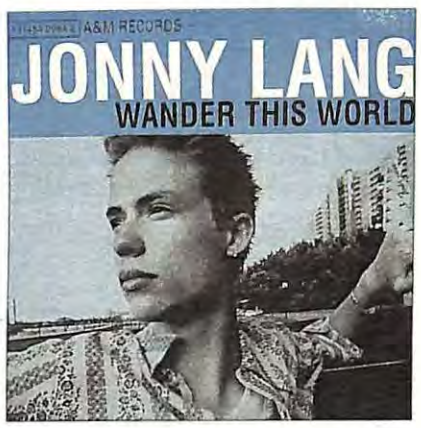


Baby" on "Too Cold." Nothing, however, can redeem Ice's wack boasting on songs like "Prozac." The best assessment of *Hard to Swallow* comes from the man himself on the tune "A.D.D.," when he says, "I just can't hide from myself." –RICHARD TORRES

★★★
WANDER THIS WORLD
Jonny Lang
A&M

FOR WHATEVER REASON – IT JUST sounds good, I guess – Jonny Lang would have you believe that he has stretched beyond the blues since his dramatic 1997 major-label debut, *Lie to Me*. But anyone familiar with that album and its follow-up, *Wander This World*, would have a hard time distinguishing between them. On *Lie to Me*, his blues were already laced with healthy doses of soul and R&B, and they continue to be.

The seventeen-year-old Lang, there can be no doubt, is a certifiable prodigy. His guitar playing is at once precocious and ferocious, a fevered attack reminiscent of the late Luther Allison (whose "Cherry Red Wine" Lang incinerates to close this set). On the downside,



Lang still oversings at just about every moment. Of course, trying to sound meaner, older, blacker than you are has been a flaw of the white-boy blues since back in the day – Clapton was guilty of it as recently as *From the Cradle*.

Lang co-wrote three of the tunes on *Wander*, and they're good ones. The seething ballad "Walking Away" is particularly strong. Lang leans into it with all his might, and the song withstands his assault – which too little of his material is able to do. As a result, you tend to find yourself waiting for the solos, and they never disappoint. Really, as a player, Lang is simply frightening. And if an equally expressive voice – as a writer, as a singer – is yet to come to his young-man blues, he's got plenty of time to burn. –ANTHONY DECURTIS

★★★
EL OSO
Soul Coughing
SLASH/WARNER BROS.

SOUL COUGHING JUST MAY BE RAP rock's great white hope – emphasis on the *maybe*. *El Oso*, the New York quartet's third album, finds it losing the tug of war between avant-garde adven-



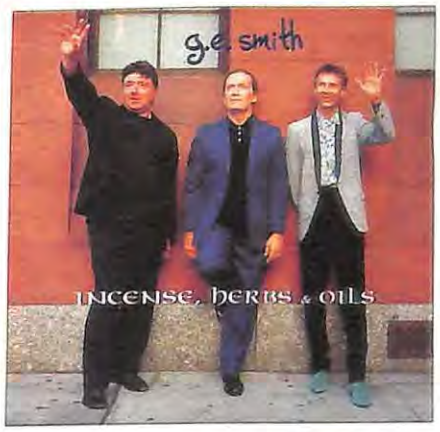
turousness and alt-rock accessibility. Despite the bouncy guitar *sproing!* of the single "Circles," which should appeal to Dave Matthews fans, *El Oso* returns to the band's more out-there leanings. It's a tack that doesn't play to Soul Coughing's strengths. For instance, bandleader M. Doughty's neo-Ginsbergian howl – a cross between Beck's get-down Dylanisms and They Might Be Giants' playful poesy – is more upfront than ever, and that's not always a good thing. On 1996's *Irresistible Bliss*, co-producer David Kahne tempered Doughty's free association with real hooks. This time, co-producer Tchad Blake (who also oversaw *Ruby Vroom*) lets Doughty's lyrical spew and nasal whine run wild, which can get repetitive and annoying – just why *does* he repeat "roller-boogie motherfucker" endlessly on "Houston"? The album's catchiest song is "Rolling," which sports some ill drum-and-bass rhythms; elsewhere, the band enlists U.K. producer Optical to help it keep up with the jungle Joneses. However flawed their stylistic experiments may be, Soul Coughing remain admirable in comparison with their peers in the rap-rock sweepstakes. –MATT DIEHL

★★★
INCENSE, HERBS AND OILS
G.E. Smith
GREEN MIRROR MUSIC/LOUISIANA RED HOT

★★★
SKINNY KAT
Taylor Barton
GREEN MIRROR MUSIC/LOUISIANA RED HOT

BEING A GREAT ROCK ACCOMPAnist requires so much chameleonic versatility that it can negate the ability to cultivate and impress a musical signature of one's own. That is the dilemma facing George Edward "G.E." Smith – sideman to such stars as Bob Dylan, Buddy Guy, and Hall and Oates; musical director for *Saturday Night Live* for ten years; and leader of the house band at Live Aid and a slew of other big events. Instead of worrying about it, Smith has employed his composite skills to craft a rootsy album that is a modest tour de force of American music. *Incense, Herbs and Oils* offers a barnstorming roadhouse blues ("Trouble in the Woods"), a demented Cajun novelty (Jerry Reed's "Amos Moses," growled with gleeful abandon by Smith), a lyrically fetching bit of folk-rock minstrelsy ("Dusty Streets of Cairo") and even a stab at rap or, more accurately, recitation (the musing "Sunday"). While Smith's ungussied voice is serviceable and at times even animated, it's his guitar, with its unfailing eloquence and deep vocabulary, that is the true practitioner of the healing arts on *Incense, Herbs and Oils*.

Smith brings the same infallible musicianship to bear on *Skinny Kat*, the second solo album by Taylor Barton, who is his wife. Smith and his band mates provide the musical frame, but Barton herself is definitely the picture,



projecting a lush, nurturing romanticism that defiantly cleaves to ideals of grace and beauty in a sullied world. Her delicate, unaffected voice conveys a beguiling wistfulness on such songs as "Violets' Cry" and "Dear Rose." Meanwhile, artfully restrained instrumental settings suit tuneful, poppish threnodies like "If I Had Faith" and "Tornado" to a T. –PARKE PUTERBAUGH

★★★½
POINT BLANK
Dub Pistols
1500/A&M

DUB PISTOLS OBVIOUSLY FANCY themselves punks – there's their name, for starters, and song titles like "There's Gonna Be a Riot" and "Anarchy." They are addicted to silly revolutionary slogans, and they find joy in disruption: hellish ax slashes, muscular speed rapping, screeching fire-station sirens, fist-pumping tube-station shouts. A crassly sensational sort of ska revival for the Chemical Brothers crowd, *Point Blank*'s blue-beat big beat fires charging-pachyderm trumpets, intergalactic Pac-Man bleeps and crazed witch-doctor toasts through a relentless mosaic of old-school break beats, then

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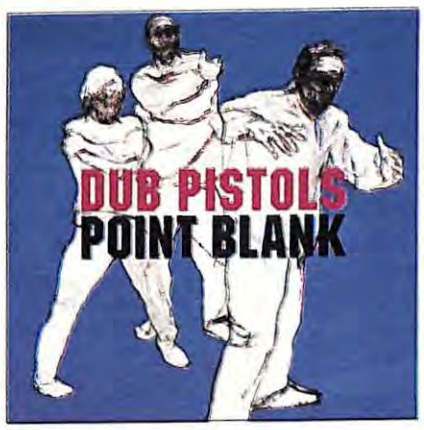
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★★★½
RISE UP!
Bobby Conn
TRUCKSTOP/ATAVISTIC

TALK ABOUT MIXING THE SACRED and the profane. How does a bit of Marvin Gaye's "What's Going On" crossed with, say, Mel Brooks' "Springtime for Hitler" grab you? Or how about a head-on collision between "Suffragette City" and "MacArthur Park" (the Richard Harris version, natch)? That's the territory covered by diminutive Chicagoan Bobby Conn on *Rise*



Up!, a would-be rock opera about the apocalypse. The concept doesn't really hang together, but who cares? Half the fun is listening to Conn rant, croon, preach and plead about doom, decadence and the Antichrist. "I'm gonna do you all/In my satin Speedo," he crows on "White Bread" while a munchkin chorus, a jaunty piccolo and a fuzzed-up guitar dance in merriment. Elsewhere, lyrics are sung in Hebrew, nervous New Wave grooves mutate into swank bossa novas, and lead vocals float in falsetto homage to Gaye or mutter confessions in a Sammy Davis Jr. baritone.

"I have forgotten how to dream," an exhausted little Bobby declares, alone in the imaginary spotlight of the album's last song, "Rise Up, Now!" Then the music sweeps him away; in less than four minutes, it moves from orchestral pop to disco funk, pauses for a Moog solo and then goes into a rousing finale worthy of *Godspell*. Can't wait to see the video. –GREG KOT

★★★
NEXT MILLENNIUM
Bounty Killer
BLUNT/TVT

ALREADY A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE cutthroat realm of dance-hall reggae, Bounty Killer (a.k.a. Rodney Basil Price) raises the stakes on his fourth domestic



release, *Next Millennium*, as he seeks to increase his audience. The proven means to this end – collaborating with U.S. hip-hop artists – works well for the Killer here: He employs hardcore sensation Noreaga (on the booming title track), as well as Queens roughnecks Mobb Deep ("Deadly Zone") and Brooklyn's Killah Priest ("No Supastar"). Obvious nods to radio like the Wyclef-produced "It's a Party" – which borrows the hook from Rufus and Chaka Khan's "Ain't Nobody" – sink into a commercial morass, but Bounty Killer always comes up with raggamuffin tracks like "Eagle and Di Hawk" and "Can't Believe Mi Eye" to fall back on. –S.H. FERNANDO JR.

★★★
THE THINGS WE MAKE
Six by Seven
MANTRA/BEGGARS BANQUET/INTERSCOPE

ON THE BLISSFULLY FATALISTIC opening track of *The Things We Make*, Six by Seven's keening vocalist, Chris Olley, spells out his band's credo: ". . . For goodness' sake/The things I make/Have no use/But they have the most beautiful shape." Hailing from Nottingham, England, this quintet belongs to a shrinking cadre of rock bands that can make an extended guitar peal sound as fresh as it did the first time Thurston Moore went to town on his Stratocaster. *The Things We Make* is a symphony of well-wrought anti-pop divided into discrete songs that translate and embellish the secret language of guitars: They whine, they wail, they rise



from hushed plucking to distorted riffing to majestic crescendos. In a world where Dave Matthews reigns as guitarist supreme, jam aficionados should find some comfort in Six by Seven's dreamy aural universe. –NEVA CHONIN

★★½
WHY DO THEY ROCK SO HARD?
Reel Big Fish
MOJO

ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO ITS 1996 gold-selling debut album, this Orange County, California, seven-piece continues its energetic love affair with the impossibly lame, offering catchy tunes with titles like "I Want Your Girlfriend to Be My Girlfriend Too" and "Scott's a Dork." On "Big Star," a ballad as generic as it is ironic, singer Aaron Barrett straightens his smirk and fancies himself "the asshole of your dreams." Tightening up with producer John Avila (formerly of Oingo Boingo), Reel Big Fish add some rock structure to their mall blue beats on *Why Do They Rock So Hard?*. With its crisp, almost inappropriately sensitive horns, the band represents the funny-hatted sound of ska during these wholesome party-hearty days when Barenaked Ladies rule. But Reel Big Fish could really stand a little more rancid charm. –JAMES HUNTER

★★★½
BLOQUE
LUAKA BOP/WARNER BROS.

"WE ARE PARTYING," SINGS Bloque frontman Iván Benavides, "and the world is crumbling!" It's time to invent a better category than "rock en español" for this Colombian octet, which whips up a complex, provocative blend on its debut. Lilting folk melodies and thundering waves of Latin rhythm underpin distorted rock guitars; potentially melodramatic love songs are undercut by hip-hop bravado and sarcastic humor. On "Daño en el Baño," Benavides sings from the vantage point of a wrecked bathroom. Mayte Montero brings an uninhibited, rural flair to her vocals on the ebullient "Majaná" and the jazz-tinged "La Pluma." Nothing is too



audacious for this band: "Nena" is a shotgun marriage of Led Zep and salsa; "Rap del Rebusque" matches tongue-twisting rap with strutting Latin horns; "Ay Dónde Andará" mates Afropop guitar chatter with churchy organ flourishes. To paraphrase the band's lyrics, *Bloque* collapses tired notions about Latin rock and dances on the ruins. –GREG KOT

★★★
SOUNDS OF NORTH AMERICAN FROGS: THE BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VOICE IN FROGS
SMITHSONIAN/FOLKWAYS

FROM THE BOTTOMLESS FOLKWAYS archives of that indefatigable auteur Moses Asch comes a Smithsonian reissue of this remarkable 1958 recording, one of the creative pillars of the entire nature-sounds genre. Conceived, recorded and narrated by Charles M. Bogert – whose baleful monotone bears a disquieting similarity to those civics-films voice-overs on Firesign Theater recordings – *Sounds of North American Frogs* offers a detailed set of written annotations and ninety-two fascinating tracks of sounds that should send adventurous producers scurrying for their samplers. Among my favorites are the barking tree frog, which has a metallic, oilcanlike timbre that suggests the sound of Miles Davis' amplified, wah-wah-pedaled trumpet on *Live/Evil* and *On the Corner*; the Southwestern Woodhouse's toad of Phoenix, which possesses a spine-tingling cry that might sound like a damsel in distress to denizens of the desert; and the Eastern narrow-mouthed toad, which displays a doo-wop style that evokes the sound of bagpipes. –CHIP STERN

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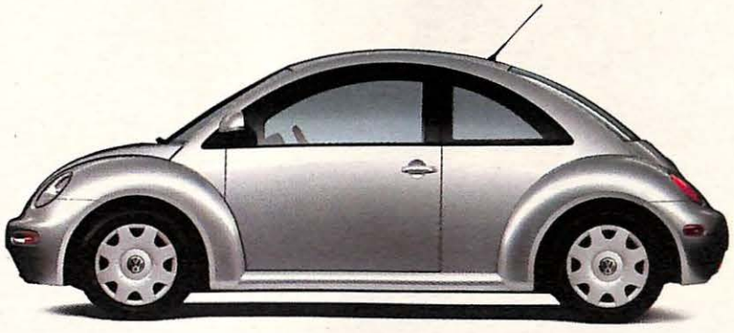
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WOODY ALLEN PLAYS THE FAME GAME

MOVIES

BY PETER TRAVERS

Starlets! Supermodels! Leo mania! The Woodman takes a provoking comic swipe at the traps of celebrity

CELEBRITY

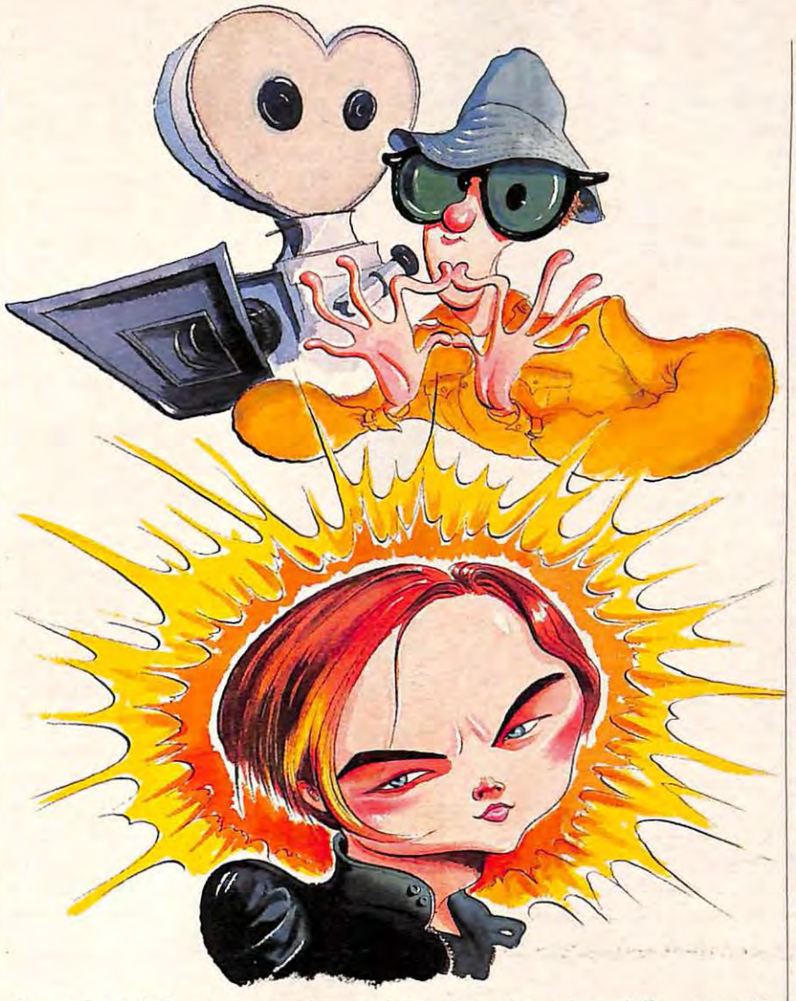
STARRING

Leonardo DiCaprio, Winona Ryder, Charlize Theron, Judy Davis and Kenneth Branagh

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

Woody Allen

MIRAMAX



IS WOODY ALLEN OVER? AS IN stale? As in Seventies relic? As in so beset by scandals and diminishing box-office returns that he should just roll over instead of making a movie a year and feebly attempting to shore up a faltering career by hiring hip, young actors to recycle his tired jokes?

That about sums it up if you go by the septic buzz from the New York Film Festival, which presented Allen's star-studded *Celebrity* as its opening-night attraction in September, prior to the comedy's release this month. After twenty-seven films, Woody is taking the same heat that his alter ego took from visiting space aliens in 1980's *Stardust Memories* – "Tell funnier jokes." Or at least fresher ones. The word is out: *Celebrity* is refried comic beans that no amount of megastar seasoning – Leonardo DiCaprio playing a teen idol in full party-boy overdrive – can camouflage.

My advice? Before you hang Allen with the rope of his own celebrity, see the movie. *Celebrity* suffers from lulls and lapses and one lulu of a casting gaffe, but this keenly observant spoof of the fame game is hardly the work of a burnout. At sixty-two, the Woodman can still mine caustic laughter from the darkest corners of his psyche. In *Celebrity,* he cracks his ringmaster's whip on a circus of rude, cathartic fun.

Allen's absence in front of the camera may be due to recent audience revulsion at seeing an old codger screen-kiss the tender flesh of Julia Roberts, Mira Sorvino and Elisabeth Shue. So the Woody Allen role in *Celebrity,* that of celebrity-interviewer Lee Simon, goes to Kenneth Branagh, 37, the Belfast-born master thespian. Branagh, whether by his choice or his director's, plays Lee like a Woody impressionist, down to the nervous gestures and the stuttering whine. Lee is bruised by a failed career as a novelist and a failed marriage to the distraught Robin (Judy Davis), a teacher. Although Lee is genuinely loved by Bonnie (Famke Janssen, subtle and appealing), an editor who encourages his artistic bent, he dumps her for Nola (Winona Ryder, never more bewitching), a struggling actress who would dump him for anyone who dangled a part. The point is, Lee should emerge as flawed but real in a world of gorgeous poseurs. Instead, Branagh's party-trick performance keeps audiences at a distance.

What saves the day is the steady march of scintillating cameos from actors who bring out the best in Allen's barbed dialogue. First up is the playfully lusty Melanie Griffith as a married movie star who refuses to let Lee get in her pants when he flirts with her during an interview but who uses Clinton-esque logic to justify a blow job ("What I do above the neck is a different story"). Then there's the supermodel, played by Charlize Theron, a knockout who can toss her curves or curve a comic line with stunning dexterity. The model also teases Lee with erotic promises but flees to protect her reputation. In Allen's view, the centrifugal force of celebrity sucks up everything in its path.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Lee's interview with teen idol Brandon Darrow (DiCaprio), who is slapping his girlfriend (Gretchen Mol) when Lee enters the kid's freshly trashed hotel suite. "You fucking bitch," cries Brandon. No hard feelings; fame has its privileges. Brandon is soon his famous smiling self, flattering Lee about his screenplay, offering a line of blow and a place at his orgy. Lee begs off, claiming nerves about "unclothed male genitalia" – a great Woody line blundered by Branagh. No matter. DiCaprio is a live wire; he nails this hilarious sequence – sure to sour his *Titanic* dreamboat status – with self-parodying glee.

At other times, Allen's film – with its celebrity priests, rabbis, hookers, plastic surgeons and walk-ons from the likes of Joey Buttafuoco – merely draws easy snickers from easy targets. What makes the film distinctively witty and vital is that Allen's most telling jest isn't about celebrity at all; it's about accommodation. In the Seventies, we laughed derisively when Andy Warhol declared that everybody would be famous for fifteen minutes. Now, not only have we stopped laughing, we're seriously trying to figure out how best to exploit the time.

Look at Lee. He's tired of hearing his novel scoffed at with the three *s* words: sophomoric, self-indulgent, solipsistic. Why not get on the Hollywood bandwagon, where trivial spells success? His intellectually wired ex-wife, Robin (Davis has a ball in the role), has been transformed by her TV-producer lover (the excellent Joe Mantegna) into a blandly assured TV host. "I'm everything I ever hated," she tells Lee, "and I've never been happier." How long can Lee hang on to outdated ideas of integrity? At the end of the film, which might fairly be called Allen's *Invasion of the Body*

NOW PLAYING

ALMOST EVERY YEAR SOME CHARM-LOADED, low-budget flick wins a place on the Academy's Best Picture ballot along with the big guns. Think of *Babe, Il Postino* or *The Full Monty.* Now *Waking Ned Devine* steps up to score in the Oscar lottery. Set in the Irish coastal village of Tulaigh Morh (population fifty-two), the film is actually about a lottery. Bachelor Ned has just won a fortune, but nobody can wake him – he's dead in bed, still clutching the ticket that made his heart stop in shock. Two wily geezers – Jackie (Ian Bannen) and Michael (David Kelly) – hit on a scheme to have Michael pretend to be Ned so as as to fool the lottery man in from Dublin. The other villagers catch on, with merry results. Delightful is the word for Bannen and Kelly as a comic team; they know how to hold their blarney. Not so for first-time writer-director Kirk Jones, who seems drunk on twinkle. Jones even has scrawny Michael ride a motorcycle naked – that's right: full monty. Doesn't Jones know that nothing kills charm faster than desperation?

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL WITTE









Woody Allen ringmasters a celebrity circus with a supermodel (Charlize Theron), a teen idol (Leonardo DiCaprio) and an actress (Winona Ryder).

Snatchers, the prospects aren't hopeful. And to those who say that the cautionary notes ringing in *Celebrity* aren't relevant, consider this: Woody Allen can now be heard as the voice of a neurotic but kid-friendly insect in *Antz*, an animated feature that is, hands-down, the biggest box-office success of his career.

ELIZABETH

REVISIONIST HISTORY THAT ALlows an unwed sixteenth-century English queen to get it on before declaring herself a career virgin also allows the lush *Elizabeth* to bust free of period torpor. Stuffy it's not. Australian actress Cate Blanchett has a passionate fire and wit that command attention. Think of Princess Diana when British screenwriter Michael Hirst and Delhi-born director Shekhar Kapur show a girl forced into womanhood by the duties of royalty.

At times the film is annoyingly enamored with its own campy, post-feminist cleverness. Here's this tender girl, deferential to her lover, Lord Dudley (Joseph Fiennes, Ralph's raffish brother), until she's thrust on the throne, pressured to marry a Catholic and to breed sons. Naturally, she rebels. Blanchett makes Elizabeth's transformation from mouse to marriage-hating monarch such a hypnotic spectacle that you're happy when she stops diddling Dudley and starts kicking the ass of the conniving Duke of Norfolk (Christopher Eccleston). Her chief ally is spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham (Geoffrey Rush), who has a nasty habit of slitting the throats of the boys he buggers. Still, he's handy in a crisis. Rush slithers with a wonderfully sinister allure, but the film belongs to Blanchett – this hellcat Virgin Queen is something to see.



Trouble for Meryl Streep, Brid Brennan, Sophie Thompson

DANCING AT LUGHNASA

FIVE UNMARRIED SISTERS IN IREland, circa 1936. Amid harsh poverty, these Christian women listen to a radio tune and dance with an abandon that rivals a pagan harvest festival. Onstage, in Brian Friel's Tony-winning play, the moment is one of theatrical magic. Director Pat O'Connor's screen version can't match it. The release of tension doesn't feel as powerful in a film that lets us see outside the Mundy sisters' constricted kitchen. Still, a luminous cast reveals long-buried feelings. Meryl Streep finds the expansive soul behind prim schoolteacher Kate. And she is matched by Kathy Burke's bawdy Maggie, Brid Brennan's secretive Agnes, Sophie Thompson's slow-witted Rose and Catherine McCormack's bold Christina, who never married the father of her son. It's the mysterious return of brother Jack (Michael Gambon) from the African missions that spurs a family crisis. The movie is no more than a delicate whisper as each sister reveals her grieving heart, but it's no less extraordinary for that.



Rap royalty: Queen Latifah sings jazz and acts.

LIVING OUT LOUD

RAPPER QUEEN LATIFAH WAILS the wounded heart out of Billy Strayhorn's "Lush Life." Her opening song perfectly catches the jazz-and-cocktails mood of this rueful comic romance from screenwriter Richard LaGravenese (*Beloved*, *The Horse Whisperer*) in a promising directing debut. Holly Hunter stars as Judith, a rich Manhattanite who is dumped by her doctor husband (Martin Donovan) and begins living in fantasies of sex and exhibitionism.

Judith finds comfort with Pat (Danny DeVito), the sympathetic elevator operator in her co-op. But Pat mistakes Judith's loneliness for a deeper need. Hunter and DeVito give touchingly nuanced performances, and Latifah proves that her raves for *Set It Off* were no fluke by stealing every scene she's in as Liz, the vocalist who befriends Judith but can't sing away her own heartache.

Living Out Loud has the quality of a European film, owing to the character revelations in John Bailey's eloquent cinematography and the Chekhov stories (*The Kiss* and *Misery*) that inspired the script. LaGravenese may be unsteady at the helm, but his film insinuates like a torch song that keeps messing with your head.

THE SIEGE

ED ZWICK IS TAKING FLAK FROM the Council on American-Islamic Relations for directing and co-writing a thriller about Arab terrorism in New York that the Council says is likely to increase hatred of Muslims. Denzel Washington as an FBI task-force head, Annette Bening as a CIA operative and Bruce Willis as an Army general each have an agenda in reacting to the bombing of a bus in Brooklyn and a dignitary-packed Broadway theater. Martial law is declared, and Arab-Americans are herded into detention camps just as Japanese-Americans were during World War II.



Face-off: Denzel Washington and Bruce Willis

It's a provocative premise, and Zwick aims for fairness by casting Lebanese actor Tony Shalhoub as an Arab-American FBI agent whose family is victimized. And Zwick condemns the CIA for its blowbacks and the U.S. military for its torture tactics. Still, *The Siege* is not a documentary but a glossy Hollywood entertainment that is prey to all the exaggerations, simplifications and acting histrionics that come with the genre. It's difficult to sustain a responsible subtext when you're delivering the jolts required to keep butts in the seats. ◆

BACK TO GLAM: "VELVET GOLDMINE"

IT'S EASY TO DESCRIBE WHAT WRITER-director Todd Haynes does in *Velvet Goldmine* as a swooningly sexy tribute to the rude boys in mascara and heels who detonated the musical and sexual explosion of Seventies glam rock.

It's easy to see Jonathan Rhys Meyers' fictional Brian Slade as the essence of Bowie glitter – right down to his Ziggy Stardust alter ego, here called Maxwell Demon, whose murder he fakes onstage. Likewise, Ewan McGregor gives Curt Wild the suck-my-cock swagger of the Iggy Pop who transfixed Bowie. Rhys Meyers and McGregor throw themselves into the makeup, the clothes, the drugs, the bi sex and the blazing music with a dynamism that is never less than mesmeric.



All that glitters: Jonathan Rhys Meyers (left) and Ewan McGregor

But finding the image that might help to define the essence of the film – that's hard. Let's try this one: It's a flashback to British journalist Arthur Stuart (Christian Bale) as a boy, locked in his room and jerking off while staring at an LP cover featuring an androgynous pop icon. The moment is erotic, squalid, suffused with longing and totally appropriate. What else could a fan do when faced with a cultural movement that played seductive games with gender and identity? Failing all else, you fuck your way in.

Haynes creates *Velvet Goldmine* from the perspective of that fan, with a masturbatory fervor that demands dead-on details ("Weird Scenes From the Velvet Goldmine," Page 64). He fashions a structure out of *Citizen Kane*: Arthur, working for an American tabloid in 1984, tries to deconstruct Slade by interviewing his ex-wife (Toni Colette), his ex-manager (Eddie Izzard) and even Curt Wild. The plot only slows a film that works best as a feast of sight and sound. *Velvet Goldmine* locates its Rosebud in that album cover Arthur tried to ravish alone in his room. In re-creating an era as a gorgeous carnal dream, Haynes celebrates the art of the possible.



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FAST FOOD

[*Cont. from 83*] room. Workers call it "fab." When we step inside, fab seems familiar: steel catwalks, pipes along the walls, a vast room, a maze of conveyor belts. This could be the Lamb Weston plant, except hunks of red meat ride the belts instead of french fries. Some machines assemble cardboard boxes, others vacuum-seal subprimals of beef in clear plastic. The workers look extremely busy, but there's nothing unsettling about this part of the plant. You see meat like this all the time in the back of your local supermarket.

The fab room is refrigerated, kept at about forty degrees. As you head up the line, the feel of the place starts to change. The pieces of meat get bigger. Workers – about half of them women, almost all of them young and Latino – slice meat with long, slender knives. They stand at a table that is chest high, grab meat off a conveyor belt, trim away fat, throw meat back on the belt, toss the scraps onto a conveyor belt above them and then grab more meat, all in a matter of seconds. I'm now struck by how many workers there are, hundreds of them, pressed close together, constantly moving, slicing. You see hard hats, white coats, flashes of steel. Nobody is smiling or chatting; they're too busy, anxiously trying not to fall behind. An old man walks past me, pushing a blue plastic barrel filled with scraps. A few workers carve the meat with Whizzards, small electric knives that have spinning round blades. The Whizzards look like the Norelco razors that Santa rides in the TV ads. I notice that a few of the women near me are sweating, even though the place is freezing cold.

Sides of beef suspended from an overhead trolley swing toward a group of men. Each worker has a large knife in one hand and a steel hook in the other. They grab the meat with their hooks and attack it fiercely with their knives. As they hack away, using all their strength, grunting, the place suddenly feels different, primordial. The machinery seems beside the point, and what's going on here has been going on for thousands of years – the meat, the hook, the knife, men straining to cut more meat.

On the kill floor, what I see no longer unfolds in a logical manner. It's one surreal image after another. A worker with a power saw slices cattle into halves as though they were two-by-fours, and then the halves swing by me into the cooler. Dozens of cattle, stripped of their skins, dangle on chains from their hind legs. My host stops and asks how I feel, whether I want to go any farther. This is where some people get sick. The kill floor is hot and humid. Cattle have a body temperature of about 101 degrees, and there are a lot of them in the room. It stinks of manure. Carcasses swing so fast along the rail that you have to keep an eye on them constantly, dodge them, watch your step, or one will slam you and throw you onto the bloody concrete floor. It happens to workers all the time.

I see: a man reach inside cattle and pull out their kidneys with his bare hands, then drop the kidneys down a metal chute, over and over again, as each animal passes by him; a stainless-steel rack of tongues; Whizzards peeling meat off decapitated heads, picking them almost as clean as the white skulls painted by Georgia O'Keeffe. We wade through blood that's ankle deep and that pours down drains into vats below us. As we approach the start of the line, for the first time I hear the steady pop, pop, pop of live animals being stunned.

The cattle suspended above me look just like the cattle I've seen on ranches for years, but these ones are upside down, swinging on hooks. For a moment, the sight seems unreal; there are so many of them, a herd of them, lifeless. And then I see a few hind legs still kicking, a final reflex action, and the reality comes hard and clear.

My host hands me some Wellingtons, the kind of knee-high rubber boots that English gentlemen wear in the countryside. "Tuck your pants into the boots," he says. "We'll be walking through some blood."

For eight and a half hours, a worker called a sticker does nothing but stand in a river of blood, being drenched in blood, slitting the neck of a steer every ten seconds or so, severing its carotid artery. He uses a long knife and must hit exactly the right spot to kill the animal humanely. He hits that spot again and again. We walk up a slippery metal stairway and reach a small platform, where the production line begins. A man turns and smiles at me. He wears safety goggles and a hard hat. His face is splattered with gray matter and blood. He is the knocker, the man who welcomes cattle to the building. Cattle walk down a narrow chute and pause in front of him, blocked by a gate, and then he shoots them in the head with a captive bolt stunner – a gun attached to the ceiling by a long hose – which fires a column of compressed air that knocks the cattle unconscious. The animals keep strolling up, oblivious to what comes next, and he stands over them and shoots. For eight and a half hours, he just shoots. As I stand there, he misses a few times and shoots the same animal twice. As soon as the steer falls, a worker grabs one of its hind legs and shackles it to a chain, and the chain lifts the huge animal into the air.

I watch the knocker knock cattle for a couple of minutes. The animals are powerful and strong one moment and then gone in an instant, suspended from a rail, ready to have their necks slit. A steer slips from its chain, falls to the ground, and gets its head caught in a conveyor belt. The line stops as workers struggle to free the steer, stunned but alive, from the machinery. I've seen enough.

I step out of the building into the cool night air and follow the path that leads cattle into the slaughterhouse. They pass me, driven toward the building by workers with long white sticks that seem to glow in the dark. One steer turns and tries to run. But workers drive him back to join the rest. The cattle lazily walk single file toward the muffled sounds, pop, pop, pop, coming from the open door.

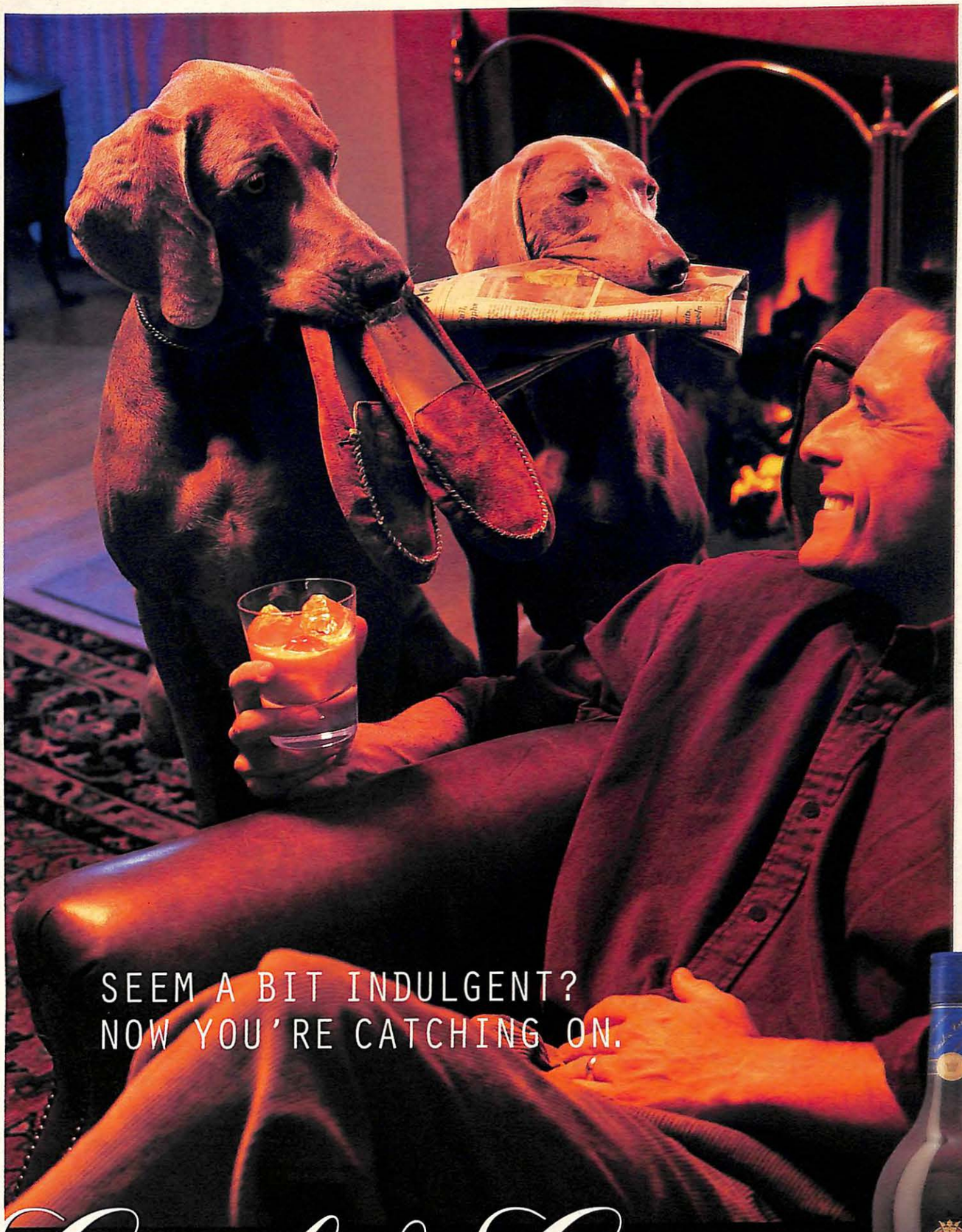
The path has hairpin turns that prevent cattle from seeing what's in store, keeping them relaxed. As the ramp gently slopes upward, the animals may think they're headed for another truck, another road trip – and they are, in unexpected ways. The ramp widens as it reaches ground level and then leads to a large cattle pen with wooden fences, a corral that belongs in a meadow, not here. As I walk along the fence, a group of cattle approaches me, looking me straight in the eye, like dogs hoping for a treat, and follow me, out of some mysterious impulse. I stop and try to absorb the whole scene: the cool breeze, the cattle and their gentle lowing, a cloudless sky, steam rising from the plant in the moonlight. And then I notice that the building does have one window, a small square of light on the second floor. It offers a glimpse of what's hidden behind this huge, blank façade. Through the little window you can see bright-red carcasses on hooks, going round and round.

IN THE EARLY PART OF THIS CENTURY, hamburgers had a bad reputation. According to the historian David Gerard Hogan, the hamburger was considered "a food for the poor," tainted, unsafe to eat. Restaurants rarely served hamburgers; they were sold at lunch carts parked near factories, at circuses, carnivals and state fairs. Ground beef was rumored to contain old, putrid meat heavily laced with chemical preservatives. "The hamburger habit is just about as safe," one food critic warned, "as getting your meat out of a garbage can. . . ." White Castle, the nation's first hamburger chain, worked hard in the 1920s to dispel the hamburger's tawdry image. As Hogan notes in his history of the chain, *Selling 'em by the Sack*, the founders of White Castle placed their grills in the direct view of customers, claimed that fresh ground beef was delivered two to four times a day, chose a name with connotations of purity and even sponsored an experiment in which a University of Minnesota medical student lived for thirteen weeks on "nothing but White Castle hamburgers and water."

The success of White Castle in the East and the Midwest helped to popularize hamburgers and to remove much of their social stigma. The chain did not attract a broad range of people, however; most of its customers were urban, working-class and male. The rise of drive-ins and fast-food restaurants in Southern California elevated the once-lowly hamburger to the status of America's national dish during the 1950s. Ray Kroc set out to attract families to McDonald's. Hamburgers seemed an ideal food for children: convenient, inexpensive, handheld and easy to chew. Prior to World War II, pork was the most widely consumed meat in the United States. Rising incomes, the growth of the fast-food industry and the mass appeal of the hamburger pushed American consumption of beef higher than that of pork. By the early 1990s, beef production was responsible for almost half of the employment in American agriculture, and the annual revenues generated by beef, nearly $50 billion, were the highest of any agricultural commodity in the United States. Every day, about one-third of the American people ate a hamburger. Roughly seventy percent of those hamburgers were bought at fast-food restaurants. And children between the ages of seven and thirteen ate more hamburgers than anyone else – an average of six a week.

In January 1993, doctors at a hospital in Seattle noticed that a large number of children were being admitted with bloody diarrhea. Some were suffering from hemolytic uremic syndrome, a disorder that often causes kidney failure. Health officials soon traced the outbreak of food poisoning to under-cooked hamburgers served at Jack in the Box restaurants. The hamburgers contained a potentially lethal microbe: Escherichia coli O157:H7. Jack in the Box issued an immediate recall of the contaminated ground beef, which had been supplied by the Vons Co. in Los Angeles. Nevertheless, more than 700 people in five different states were sickened by Jack in the Box hamburgers, about 195 were hospitalized, and four died. Most of the victims were children; Jack in the Box accepted responsibility for their medical costs, and the chain was nearly destroyed by the publicity surrounding the outbreak. But this was not the first outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 linked to fast-food hamburgers. As Nichols Fox reveals in her book on food-borne pathogens, *Spoiled*, dozens of children were sickened in 1982 by contaminated McDonald's hamburgers in Oregon and Michigan. McDonald's had quietly cooperated with investigators from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, providing ground-beef samples [*Cont. on 136*]

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FAST FOOD

[*Cont. from 134*] that proved to be tainted with E. coli O157:H7. In public, however, the McDonald's Corp. denied that its hamburgers were responsible for any illnesses. Reports on the outbreak never mentioned McDonald's, referring to the chain simply as "Restaurant A."

In the five years since the Jack in the Box outbreak, perhaps 100,000 Americans, the majority of them children, have been made seriously ill by E. coli O157:H7. Every week, on the average, a few Americans die from eating hamburgers. E. coli O157:H7 is a mutated version of a bacterium found abundantly in the human digestive system. The E. coli bacteria in our digestive system help the body synthesize vitamins and ward off dangerous organisms. E. coli O157:H7, on the other hand, releases a powerful toxin that can destroy the lining of the intestine. In most cases, the ensuing bloody diarrhea subsides within a week or so. In about six percent of the cases, however, the toxins produced by E. coli O157:H7 enter the bloodstream, interfering with kidney function and causing hemolytic uremic syndrome. Children and the elderly are the most vulnerable to developing HUS – although perfectly healthy adults can develop it, as well. The illness can cause kidney failure, anemia, internal bleeding and the destruction of vital organs. It can cause anyone to suffer seizures or strokes, or to lapse into a coma. The painful and debilitating symptoms of the illness may last for weeks. About five percent of the people who develop HUS are killed by it. Those who survive often have permanent disabilities, such as blindness or brain damage. E. coli O157:H7 is now the leading cause of kidney failure among American children.

Antibiotics have proven ineffective in treating illnesses caused by E. coli O157:H7. Some evidence indicates that treatment with antibiotics actually makes these illnesses worse. At the moment, little can be done for people with HUS, aside from the provision of fluids, transfusions and dialysis. E. coli O157:H7 infections are extraordinarily easy to transmit. To be infected by most food-borne pathogens, such as salmonella, you have to consume a fairly large dose – thousands or even millions of organisms. An infection with E. coli O157:H7 can be caused by as few as ten organisms. The microbe can survive on counter tops for days and in moist environments for weeks. Children have been infected by hand-to-mouth contact, by swimming in a contaminated water park and by crawling on contaminated carpeting at a day-care center. A microscopic particle of uncooked hamburger tainted with the bug is enough to kill you.

Although outbreaks of E. coli O157:H7 have been linked to lettuce, alfalfa sprouts and apple cider, cattle manure has ultimately been the cause of most infections. Cattle seem to be the primary host for the microbe; it thrives in their digestive systems without making the animals sick. A recent study of cattle manure at one feedlot found that about 1.6 percent of the samples carried E. coli O157:H7. Given that rate of infection, perhaps five cattle bearing the microbe are eviscerated at a large slaughterhouse every hour. The centralization and concentration of beef processing has spread E. coli O157:H7 far and wide. Steven P. Bjerklie, the former editor of *Meat and Poultry*, believes that "the structure of this industry is just beautifully conducive to massive contamination of ground beef." A single large plant can produce 800,000 pounds of hamburger meat daily – and just one animal infected with E. coli O157:H7 can contaminate 32,000 pounds of that meat because of the way ground beef is made today. A single fast-food hamburger now contains the meat of anywhere from forty to one hundred different cattle, raised in as many as half a dozen different countries.

People who bring ground beef into their kitchens must now regard it as a potential biohazard, one that may carry an extremely dangerous microbe, infectious at an extremely low dose.

During the 1980s, as changes in the meatpacking industry increased the risk of widespread contamination, the federal government cut funding for meat inspections and largely dismantled the public-health infrastructure that tracked the spread of infectious diseases. The Reagan and Bush administrations staffed the USDA – the agency responsible for meat safety – with officials who were more interested in deregulation than in careful oversight. President Reagan's first secretary of agriculture was a hog farmer; his second was a former president of the American Meat Institute (an industry lobbying group). During those same years, the National Academy of Sciences issued three reports warning that the nation's meat supply could be spreading a variety of dangerous microbes undetected.

Within days of the Jack in the Box outbreak, the chain hired David M. Theno to investigate what had gone wrong and then to fix it. Theno was a scientist who had helped Foster Farms, a family-owned poultry processor in California, eliminate most of the salmonella from its chicken. He was a strong advocate of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points programs, embracing a food-safety philosophy that tried to combine rigorous scientific analysis with common sense. The essence of HACCP plans is prevention; the most vulnerable steps in a food-production system are identified and monitored; stacks of records are kept in order to follow what goes where. Theno created the fast-food industry's first HACCP plan, a "farm to fork" policy at Jack in the Box that examined the threat to food safety at every level of production and distribution. The company gave him a mandate to do whatever was necessary, whatever the cost.

Five years after the outbreak, Theno has emerged as a maverick in the fast-food business, applauded by consumer groups but considered "the Antichrist," he says, by many people in the beef industry. Theno wants the meatpacking industry to adopt a system of "performance-based grading." Regular microbial testing would encourage slaughterhouses to install the latest meat-safety equipment, the acid washes and steam vacuums. Slaughterhouses that produced consistently clean meat would receive a grade of A. Plants that performed moderately well would receive a B, and so on. Plants that earn only a C or a D would have to do better or stick to making dog food.

The meatpacking industry has not rushed to endorse a grading system based on the cleanliness of meat. Theno thinks the industry's resistance to microbial testing is a form of denial. "If you don't know about a problem," he says, "then you don't have to deal with it." He has an optimistic faith that science and reason can halt the spread of E. coli O157:H7. The companies that manufacture hamburger patties for Jack in the Box have to test their beef every fifteen minutes for a wide range of dangerous microbes. "You can fix this problem," Theno contends. "You can actually fix the whole industry in six months. . . . This is a matter of will, not technology." The entire Jack in the Box food-safety program increases the cost of the company's ground beef by less than one penny per pound.

The Food Safety Act, passed in 1996 by Congress, requires that slaughterhouses develop some form of HACCP plan and regularly conduct microbial testing. Those tests, however, will be performed by company inspectors – not federal inspectors – and the results will not be made available to the public. Many USDA inspectors argue that the meatpacking firms have essentially been given the power to regulate themselves. These inspectors warn that under the new privately run schemes, HACCP will stand for "have a cup of coffee and pray." Ever since the Jack in the Box outbreak, the Clinton administration has sought the legal authority to issue a recall of contaminated beef and to fine the meatpacking company responsible for it. The Republican-dominated Congress, with the support of the American Meat Institute, has consistently refused to grant such powers. "We can fine circuses for mistreating elephants," Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman said earlier this year, "but we can't fine companies that violate food-safety standards."

Nichols Fox, the author of *Spoiled*, has studied the recent outbreaks of E. coli O157:H7 and interviewed the parents of its victims. Fox's research has left her "a reluctant vegetarian." She regards the rising incidence of food poisoning in the United States as a form of "just deserts," the payback for a system that allows a narrow measure of efficiency – the cheapness of food – to override much more important human values, such as a respect for animals, workers and the environment. Steven P. Bjerklie still enjoys a good steak every now and then. But he no longer eats hamburgers. The risks of E. coli O157:H7 were bad enough; the final straw for Bjerklie was learning that the Advanced Meat Recovery Systems – machines that scrape off every last piece of meat – now used at slaughterhouses have introduced pieces of spinal cord and bone marrow into ground beef. He was outraged by the health implications (spinal cord can transmit mad-cow disease) and by the greed (spinal cord should not be sold as ground beef). The meat industry has placed its faith in irradiation as a solution to many of the problems associated with contaminated meat. Bjerklie, however, says irradiation is a means to avoid dealing with the real flaws in the process: "I don't want to be served irradiated feces along with my meat."

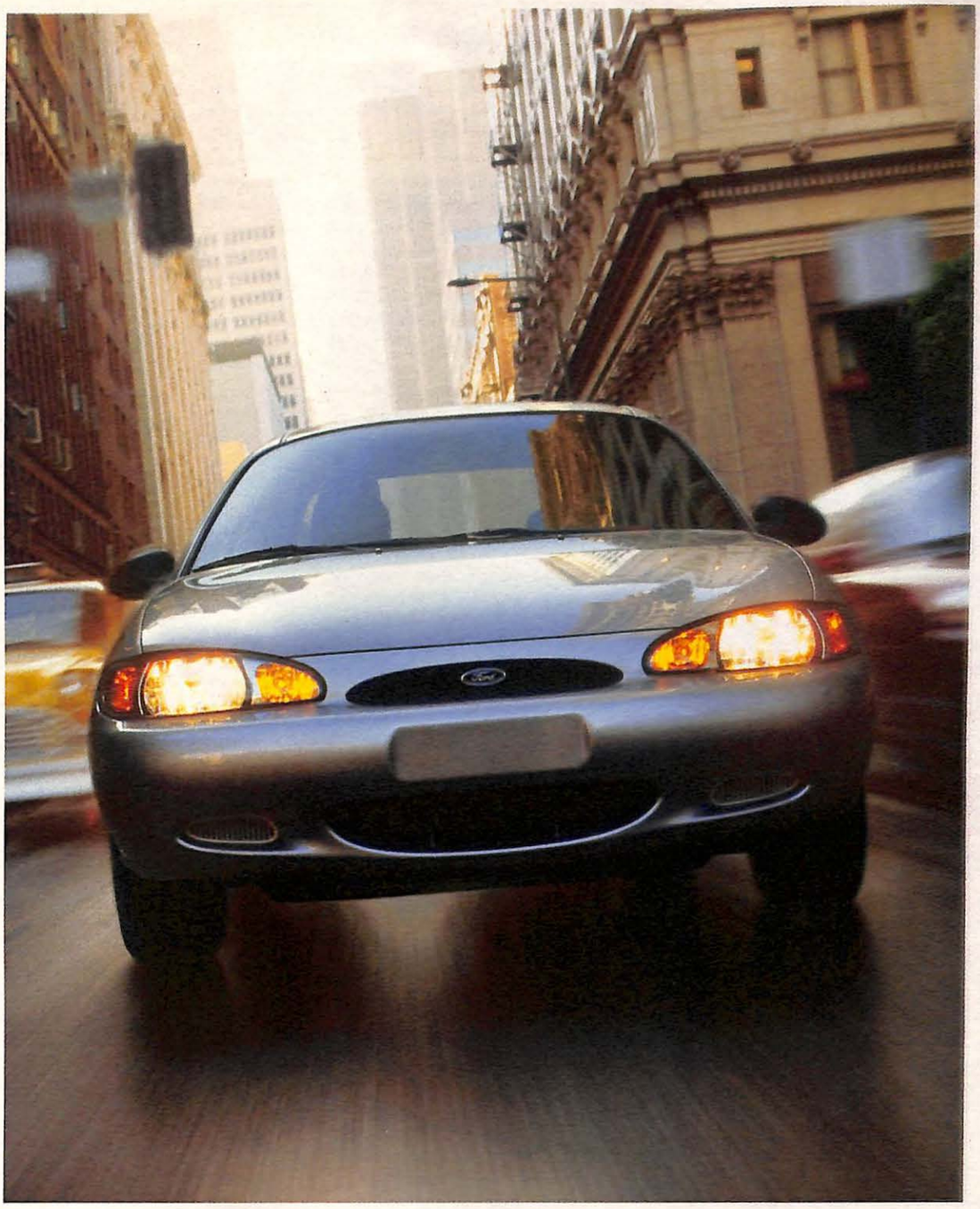
Today, the safest hamburgers in the United States are probably the ones being sold at fast-food restaurants. All of the major fast-food companies have recently adopted some sort of microbial testing. More important, the buying power of the fast-food giants gives them access to the cleanest meat. Jack in the Box now has the ability to trace a shipment of beef all the way back to its source; the USDA does not. McDonald's will not purchase ground beef that has been made with Advanced Meat Recovery machines – and yet that meat is now routinely sold, unlabeled, at supermarkets throughout the country. Last year, Hudson Beef voluntarily recalled 25 million pounds of ground beef that was potentially contaminated with E. coli O157:H7. Hudson Beef was one of Burger King's largest suppliers, but an [*Cont. on 138*]

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FAST FOOD

[*Cont. from 136*] investigation later revealed that none of the contaminated meat was shipped to the fast-food company; it was shipped to supermarkets nationwide. People who bring ground beef into their kitchens must now regard it as a potential biohazard, one that may carry an extremely dangerous microbe, infectious at an extremely low dose.

Still, no matter how many steps fast-food chains take to ensure meat safety, no matter how highly automated the grills, the safety of the food at any restaurant ultimately depends on the workers in its kitchen. Dr. Patricia Griffin, the CDC's leading expert on E. coli O157:H7, believes that education in food safety should be mandatory for people who work in commercial kitchens. "We place our lives in their hands," she says, "in the same way we entrust our lives to the training of airline pilots." Griffin worries that a low-paid, unskilled work force composed of teenagers and recent immigrants may not always be familiar with proper food-handling procedures. She has reason to worry. In an undercover investigation last year, reporters from KCBS-TV in Los Angeles videotaped local kitchen employees sneezing into their hands while preparing food, licking salad dressing off their fingers, picking their noses and smoking while cooking. The teenage fast-food workers I met in Colorado Springs told me similar stories. Many workers would not eat the food unless they prepared it themselves. A Taco Bell employee said that food dropped on the floor was often picked up and served. An Arby's employee told me that one kitchen worker never washed his hands at work after doing engine repairs on his car. And several employees at the same McDonald's told me about a cockroach infestation in the milkshake machine and about armies of mice that urinated and defecated on hamburger rolls left out to thaw in the kitchen every night.

WORLD DOMINATION

THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY took place on October 3rd, 1990, eliminating the last traces of the communist regime that built the Berlin Wall. Two months later, eastern Germany had its first McDonald's. The coming of the American fast-food chain was not universally applauded. During one of the East German Parliament's last sessions, Ernst Doerfler, chairman of the environment committee, demanded a ban on "McDonald's and similar abnormal garbage-makers." The ban was never imposed. McDonald's chose the town of Plauen, located in rural Saxony, about halfway between Munich and Berlin, as the site of its first restaurant in the east. The town had been heavily bombed by the Allies during World War II, losing about seventy-five percent of its buildings. Decades after the war, unexploded bombs were still being found. Plauen seemed the quintessential East German town: sad and dreary, dirty and run-down, with aging factories, warehouses and textile mills. The McDonald's restaurant was the first new building erected there after the collapse of the Eastern bloc.

Today, hundreds of McDonald's restaurants dot the landscape of eastern Germany. In town after town, statues of Lenin have been torn down, and statues of Ronald McDonald have popped up. One of the largest is in Bitterfeld, where a three-story-high illuminated Ronald McDonald can be seen from the autobahn for miles. When I visited Plauen last month, McDonald's was the only business open in the central market square. It was Reunification Day, a national holiday, and everything else was closed – the small shops selling used clothing and furniture, the pseudo-Irish pub on one corner, the pizzeria on another. McDonald's was packed, filled not just with children and their parents but with teenagers, seniors, young couples – a cross-section of the town. Across the street stood an abandoned building once occupied by a branch of the East German army; a few blocks away, the houses were dilapidated and covered in graffiti, looking as though the Berlin Wall had never fallen. The McDonald's was the nicest, cleanest, brightest place in all of Plauen. Children played with the Hot Wheels and Barbies that came with their Happy Meals, and smiling workers poured free refills of coffee. Outside the window, three bright-red flags bearing the golden arches fluttered in the wind.

A food-safety program increases the cost of a pound of beef by less than a penny. "You can fix the problem of contaminated beef in six months," says David M. Theno. "This is a matter of will, not technology."

Throughout the world, American fast-food chains have become symbols of Western economic development, opening everywhere from Bulgaria to Western Samoa. They are often the first multinational corporations to enter a new market. As the fast-food industry has grown much more competitive in the United States, the major chains have looked to overseas markets as the source of their future growth. In 1959, McDonald's had about 100 restaurants in the United States. Today, McDonald's has about 25,000 restaurants in more than 100 countries. It now ranks as the most widely recognized brand in the world, more familiar than Coca-Cola. Last year McDonald's opened approximately five new restaurants every day; eighty-five percent of them were located outside the United States. McDonald's now earns the majority of its profits overseas, as does KFC. A McDonald's executive told *Forbes* magazine a few years ago that the company hoped to "dominate" the fast-food industry worldwide. McDonald's recently used a new phrase to describe its push into foreign markets: "global realization."

The expansion of American fast-food companies overseas has been accompanied by the growth of the food processors that supply them. In the last decade, Cargill, ConAgra and IBP have gained control of about eighty percent of the beef industry in Canada. ConAgra owns Australia Meat Holdings, the largest beef company in a country that exports more beef than any other in the world. Today, ConAgra, Cargill and a Japanese firm, Mitsubishi, control about three-quarters of the beef industry in Australia. ConAgra's Lamb Weston division now manufactures frozen french fries in Holland, India and Turkey. McCain, the world's biggest french-fry producer, operates more than fifty processing plants scattered across four continents. In order to supply McDonald's, J.R. Simplot began to grow Idaho potatoes in China ten years ago and opened that nation's first french-fry factory in 1993. Simplot recently bought eleven processing plants in Australia, aiming to increase sales in the east-Asian market. He also purchased a 3-million-acre ranch in Australia, where he hopes to run cattle, raise vegetables and grow potatoes. "It's a great little country," J.R. Simplot says, "and there's nobody in it."

In a recent essay on McDonald's in China, the anthropologist Yunxiang Yan notes that in the eyes of Beijing consumers, the fast-food chain represents "Americana and the promise of modernization." As in the U.S., the fast-food companies have targeted those consumers with the fewest attachments to tradition: young children. A few years ago, the U.K. director of marketing for McDonald's acknowledged that its advertising was aimed at children ages two to eight, the age group most likely to become brand loyal. At a primary school in Beijing, Yunxiang Yan found that all of the children recognized Ronald McDonald. The children told Yan they liked "Uncle McDonald" because he was "funny, gentle, kind, and . . . he understood children's hearts."

Unlike movies, bluejeans and pop music, fast food is the only form of American mass culture that people literally consume. By embracing an American diet, other countries are bound to experience many of the health problems that go with it. Perhaps a third of the American people are now overweight, a proportion that has greatly increased over the last quarter-century along with the consumption of fast food. Since 1980, the rate of obesity among American children has risen by forty-two percent. Belated attempts by fast-food companies to introduce healthy meals – such as the McLean Deluxe, a hamburger partly composed of seaweed – have proved unsuccessful. A taste for fat that is developed in childhood is difficult to lose as an adult. The typical fast-food meal is low in fiber and high in saturated fats. An order of Criss-Cut Fries and a Double Western Bacon Cheeseburger at Carl's Jr. boasts ninety-one grams of fat – more fat than a dozen milkshakes. Diets low in fiber and high in animal fat have been linked to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. These "diseases of affluence" are now commonplace in the United States, but until recently they were rare in Asia. The growing popularity of American fast food in China, Japan and Hong Kong will no doubt affect their morbidity rates. A study of Japanese men who moved to the United States and switched to an American diet found that in doing so, the men tripled their consumption of fat and doubled their rate of heart disease.

The dishes served at traditional German restaurants – schnitzel, bratwurst, knackwurst and sauerbraten – are hardly the stuff of a heart-healthy diet. The rapid disappearance of such restaurants, however, has been prompted more by their high labor costs than by their menus. German restaurants now account for only about thirty percent of the food-service market in Germany. McDonald's Deutschland is by far the largest restaurant company in the nation. It opened the first German McDonald's in 1971; twenty years later, it had 400 restaurants; today it has about 850. The company's main dish happens to be named after a German city, Hamburg, where ground-beef steaks were popular in the early nineteenth century; the hamburger was born when Americans added the bun. For years, Germany has been McDonald's' most profitable market outside the United States. But there are signs that the German infatuation with American fast food may have peaked. McDonald's' annual revenues per restaurant have slowly been declining in Germany since 1993. The rapid expansion of fast-food chains there coincided with the conservative rule of Helmut Kohl, a period that celebrated order, discipline and a narrow vision of who could be considered German. The Social Democrats were voted into power in September for the first time in sixteen

years; the new government vows to strengthen environmental laws, reduce unemployment, broaden the rights of immigrants and restore a sense of community. The mood of the nation seems to have shifted, and the move of the German capital to Berlin, a city renowned for its diversity and nonconformity, may signify that a new, progressive era has begun.

The opposition to American fast-food chains voiced by German environmentalists and left-wing groups is not always shared by organizations on the far right. About a third of the young people in eastern Germany now express support for various nationalist and neo-Nazi groups. The unemployment rate in the east exceeds twenty percent, and recent immigrants are being blamed for the joblessness. Extremist groups have declared large parts of eastern Germany to be "foreigner-free" zones where immigrants are not welcome. The roads leading to Plauen are decorated with signs posted by the Deutsche Volksunion, the nation's leading neo-Nazi party. "Germany for the Germans," the signs say; "Jobs for Germans, Not Foreigners." When I asked one of the employees at the local McDonald's whether the restaurant had ever been the target of neo-Nazis, she said there hadn't been any problems or threats of that kind. People in the area did not consider McDonald's to be "foreign."

One of the most controversial McDonald's restaurants in Germany is on a nondescript street in a new shopping complex not far from Dachau, the first concentration camp opened by the Nazis. The shopping complex was built on fields where inmates once did forced labor. Although the architecture of the buildings looks German and futuristic, their haphazard placement on the land seems distinctly American. The complex would not seem out of place near an interstate offramp in Tucson, Arizona. The McDonald's is across the street from a discount supermarket; an auto-parts store stands some distance from the other buildings, separated by fields that have not yet vanished beneath concrete. Last year, a Holocaust group staged protests against the opening of a McDonald's so close to a concentration camp where Nazi scientists performed medical experiments on living people and at least 30,000 inmates died. The McDonald's Corp. denied that it was trying to profit from the Holocaust and said that the restaurant was at least a mile away from the camp. After the curator of the Dachau Museum complained that McDonald's was distributing leaflets among tourists in the camp's parking lot, giving them directions to the restaurant, the company halted the practice.

The first inmates at Dachau were political prisoners: socialists, communists, religious opponents of the Nazi regime. In later years, Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses – people considered abnormal and "degenerate" – were sent there. Upon arriving at Dachau, new inmates were greeted by a sign painted in huge white letters on the roof. It said, "The way to freedom is to follow one's orders. . . ." The McDonald's at Dachau is one-third of a mile from the entrance to the camp. The day I went there, the restaurant was staging a Western Big Mac promotion. It was decorated in a Wild West theme, with paper place mats featuring a wanted poster of BUTCH ESSIDY. The McDonald's was full of mothers and small children. Teenagers in Nikes and Levi's sat in groups smoking cigarettes. Turkish immigrants worked in the kitchen, disco music played, and the red paper cups on everyone's tray said, ALWAYS COCA-COLA. The most notable thing about the place was its total and utter banality. This McDonald's was in Dachau, but it could have been anywhere – anywhere in the United States, anywhere in the world. Millions of other people at that very moment were ordering the same food from the same menu in a hundred different languages, in almost every time zone, every longitude and latitude, food that tasted everywhere the same.

At a school in Beijing, a sociologist found that all the children recognized Ronald McDonald. They said they liked "Uncle McDonald" because he was "funny, gentle, kind and understood children's hearts."

IN THE DEMONOLOGY OF VEGETARians and environmentalists, cattle ranchers have long ranked near the top. As Dale Lasater stands in a corral full of huge bulls, feeding them treats from his hand, the stereotype doesn't quite fit. Lasater is in his early fifties, with a handlebar mustache and wire-rim glasses. He wears worn-out jeans and boots, and a well-ironed button-down shirt, looking part cowboy, part Ivy Leaguer. The bulls that crowd around him seem almost sweet, acting more like a bunch of Ferdinands than like fierce symbols of machismo. They were bred to be gentle, never dehorned and never roped. The Lasater Ranch occupies about 30,000 acres of short-grass prairie near the town of Matheson, Colorado, fifty miles northeast of Colorado Springs. It is a profitable working ranch that for half a century has not used pesticides, herbicides, poison or commercial fertilizers on the land, has not killed local predators such as coyotes, and has not administered growth hormones, anabolic steroids or antibiotics to the cattle. The Lasaters are by no means typical, but they have worked hard to change how American beef is produced. Despite years of experimentation and careful refinement, the Lasater philosophy of cattle ranching relies on a simple faith: "Nature is smart as hell."

Before taking over the family ranch, Lasater spent a year in Argentina as a Fulbright scholar, ran a feedlot company in Kansas and managed cattle ranches in Texas, Florida and New Mexico. His experiences persuaded him that the current system of agricultural production in the United States cannot be sustained. Rising grain prices will someday hit ranches and feedlots hard. More important, Lasater finds it difficult to justify feeding millions of tons of grain to American cattle, while elsewhere in the world millions of people starve. He respects a person's decision to become a vegetarian but has little patience for the air of moral superiority that often accompanies it. Growing up on the prairie gave him a view of nature that is somewhat different from the Disney version. Cattle that are not eaten by people, that are simply allowed to grow old and weak, still get eaten – by coyotes and turkey buzzards, and it's not a pretty sight.

Dale Lasater recently set up a company to sell free-range, organic, grass-fed beef. None of the cattle used in Lasater Grasslands Beef spend any time at a feedlot. The meat is much lower in fat than grain-fed beef and has a stronger, more distinctive flavor. Lasater says that most Americans have forgotten what real beef tastes like. Argentine beef is now considered a gourmet item, and almost all of the cattle in Argentina are grass-fed. The current system of beef production, relying on huge feedlots, arose during a period of low-priced, government-subsidized grain. Recent findings that E. coli O157:H7 may not survive in the intestines of grass-fed cattle have strengthened Lasater's determination to follow a different path. Lasater doesn't think that his little company will revolutionize the American beef industry; but it's a start.

Fifty miles away, on South Nevada Avenue in Colorado Springs, Rich Conway operates a family business that's also bucking the trend. Conway's Red Top Restaurant occupies a modest brick building on a street full of funky old Western motels, the kind with animated neon Indian chiefs on their signs, the kind where the U in the 4-U Motel is a golden horseshoe. Rich Conway has been through a lot. He has had a motorcycle accident and a bad car accident, and he later slipped on some ice and broke his back. Now in his late forties, Conway walks slowly with a cane but has a handsome, weathered face, a Zen-like calm and a tough, independent streak that keeps him going against the odds, the sort of qualities an American small-business man needs these days. He's a survivor. When I asked what made him provide health insurance to all his workers – a benefit fast-food restaurants rarely offer – Conway smiled politely, as though the answer was obvious, and said, "We want healthy employees."

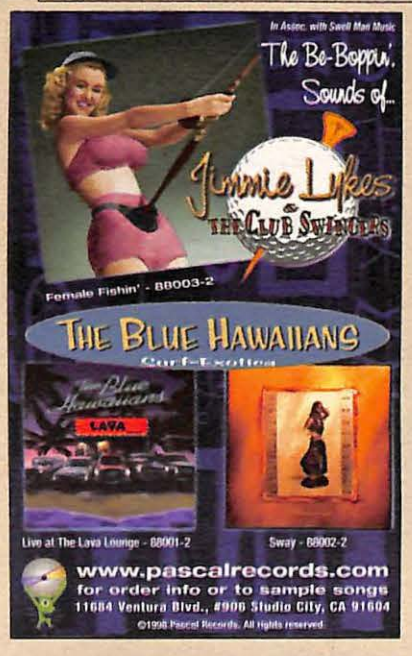
Rich Conway's parents bought the restaurant in 1962 and began serving large oval hamburgers. He grew up working there alongside his nine brothers and sisters. Conway's Red Top – with a little spinning top on its yellow sign – became a local favorite, thanks to its burgers and fries. A few years ago, the food critics Jane and Michael Stern, the authors of *Road Food*, wrote that Conway's Red Top sold some of the best hamburgers in the U.S. The restaurant thrived during the 1970s, despite an invasion by national fast-food chains that landed up and down South Nevada Avenue. But Conway's almost shut down in the early 1980s, after the death of Rich's father. The restaurant's local suppliers helped keep it afloat until new financing could be arranged. Conway's Red Top now has three locations in Colorado Springs. Rich Conway's younger brother Dan serves as finance director, and his sister Mary Kaye is the marketing director.

In the kitchen at Conway's, the hamburger patties are still formed every day by hand, using fresh ground beef. The beef is obtained from a small, family-owned grinder in Denver; Rich Conway hopes to offer Lasater beef soon. The hamburger buns come from a family-owned bakery in nearby Pueblo. Two hundred pounds of potatoes are peeled every morning in the kitchen and then are sliced into fries with an old contraption attached to the wall. The burgers and fries are made to order by cooks who earn up to ten dollars an hour and wear baseball caps that say CONWAY'S RED TOP: ONE'S A MEAL. The kitchen is not operated by fancy computer software, there's takeout but no drive-through, and the food is only slightly more expensive than what's served at the half-empty Wendy's across the street. In a completely unstaged encounter, I met a customer at Conway's who has regularly been having lunch there for fifty years.

The last hamburger I ate was prepared at Conway's Red Top. It arrived on a plate with a pile of crisp fries. And it looked so damn good – big and oval, smothered in mushrooms and cheese – that I wanted to take a picture of it and keep the picture as proof. Not everyone has bought into this fast-food nation; there are still grounds for hope. ◆

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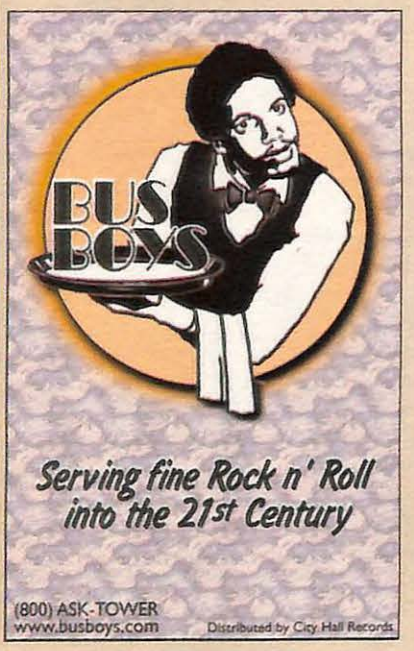


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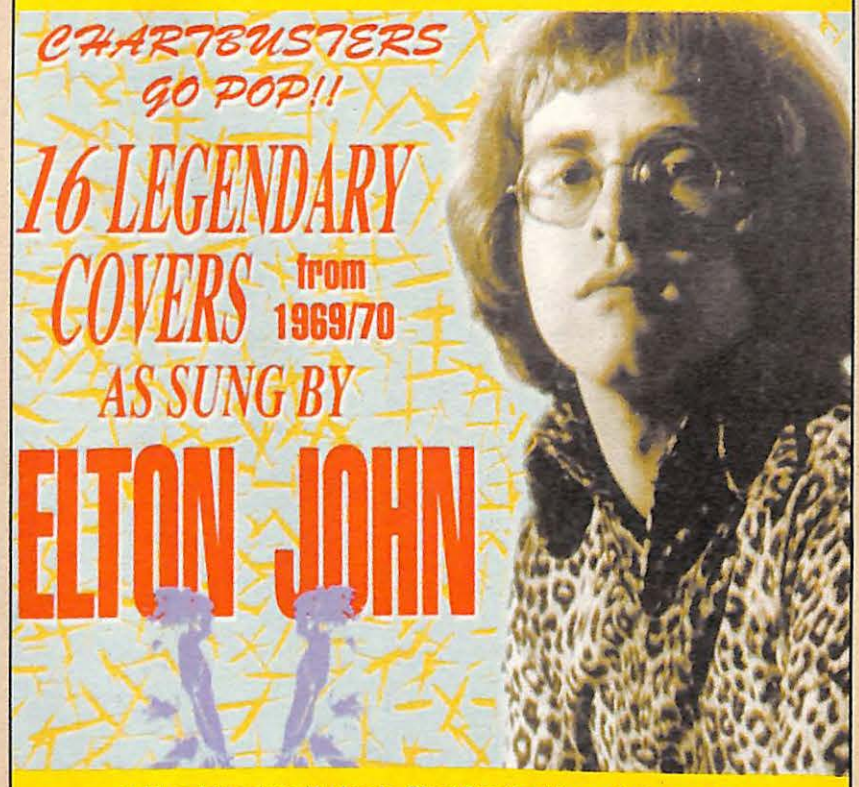


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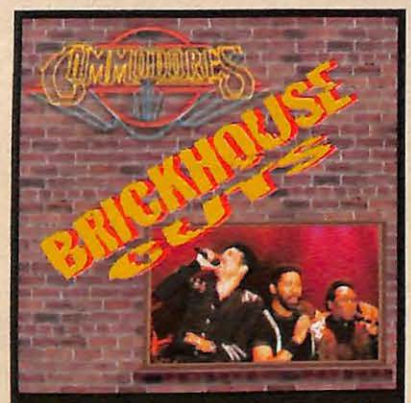
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[Cont. from 62] feel it and it was OK.

In "Are You Still Mad," you compare the guy you're addressing with all your forty-year-old male friends. Do you have many forty-year-old male friends?

A ton.

And how'd the guy you're comparing with them compare?

The biggest difficulty has always been that there are certain things that people, in this case men, who have been on this earth for forty or fifty years are just going to know more of than someone who's been on this earth twenty years or twenty-five years.

So why aren't you involved with the forty-year-old friends?

I've tried that. And the problem there is that there's a part of me that's extremely sixteen years old, and I don't want to deprive myself of that.

There's no pleasing you.

No, there is. There's being involved with someone who's chronologically close enough to me that we have some of the same pasts but is contemplative enough that they're interested in the world and have sort of experienced a lot of life for their age so we can muse about things that are, you know, typically forty-year-old musings.

In "One," you say you've abused your power. How do you think you've done that?

Oh, in subtle ways. Just taking people up on the perks of being known, whether it's getting a better seat somewhere or getting a discount on something just because my name was recognized.

And you think that's an abuse of power? You're too hard on yourself.

On a certain level I think it's an abuse. It's taking advantage of power, and it's an abuse in the sense that I would feel people come in a room and be afraid of me. And the biggest difference now is that when someone comes in a room and is afraid of me, where there was a part of me that felt like to keep the fear in the room would protect me, because then I would have the power, now what I would love to have happen is to have a person who comes in the room afraid of me leave the room not at all afraid and feel like a complete, total equal to me.

You're not a very scary person, you know.

But I was, more so.

And I don't think it's such a sin to enjoy your success. Somebody's going to get that better seat.

Yeah, but why does it have to be me?

Why does it have to be the other person? You're there, too.

Yeah, but sometimes it's a matter of picking between me and someone else, whether it's a seat or anything. "Will we give it to Alanis or to that guy over there that we don't know?" Or it's an abuse of power not showing up on time or saying no just on a whim when you know it's going to affect someone, affect a schedule – just saying no, just gratuitously.

I made a note to ask you about "So Pure," but I don't really have a question. I just like it; it's very joyous. If I were the record-buying public, that's the one that would be a hit.

Really? I almost didn't put it on the record.

Why not?

Sometimes . . . I think, to me, it's more vulnerable to be happy than it is to be miserable.

Do you still have friends from before "Jagged Little Pill"?

Mmm-hmm. My roommate is a girlfriend from high school, and my other really close friend who I speak to all the time is one of my friends since grade seven.

You share a house?

Yes. I had always lived alone forever, and I vowed that I could never have a roommate, and as soon as I stopped being the extremist that I was, I realized that I could have that work.

Most people have the roommate before they make the millions.

Right. But I always felt that suffering was a prerequisite to having a great, fulfilling life. I know, I always thought suffering was great, and I always thought that if things were comfortable, then, somehow, I was doing something wrong. Having a roommate just seemed like it would be far too comfortable. I just felt that difficulty induced growth, so much so that if I wasn't going through difficulty, I wasn't growing somehow. And I still battle that sometimes.

Right. You don't want to put happy songs on your record.

No, I'm scared of happy songs. Not as much as before. Obviously. I put it on the record.

OK, we're through. You have a very pretty name. Is your name a name?

I think it's a word in Greek. My parents saw it in a Greek newspaper. A Greek friend of mine in New York told me that it means a person that's someone who is off doing their own thing and that they liken it to a lone wolf that just runs off and does a thing outside of the family and the family would then say, "Ohhh, alanis."

Well, that's very pleasing, isn't it?

As opposed to finding out your name means "mold" or something like that? Yes. ◆

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CHARTS

TOP AVERAGE PER-SHOW GROSSES, JULY-SEPTEMBER: Jimmy Buffett ($1,053,489); Ozzfest '98 ($802,537); Dave Matthews Band ($780,688); Elton John ($730,780); Metallica ($667,892); Phish ($665,064); Lilith Fair ($621,989); Page/Plant ($609,062); Janet Jackson ($607,734); the Spice Girls ($538,792); Pearl Jam ($528,810); Rod Stewart ($505,919); Furthur Festival ($497,514); Beastie Boys ($449,852); Shania Twain ($433,879); Hanson ($389,688); Yanni ($383,100); Michael Crawford ($300,787).

ROLLING STONE READERS TOP 20

1 **BEASTIE BOYS**
Hello Nasty – Grand Royal/Capitol

2 **MARILYN MANSON**
Mechanical Animals – Nothing/Interscope

3 **THE BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA**
The Dirty Boogie – Interscope

4 **BARENAKED LADIES**
Stunt – Reprise/Warner Bros.

5 **HOLE**
Celebrity Skin – DGC/Geffen

6 **KORN**
Follow the Leader – Immortal/Epic

7 **SHERYL CROW**
The Globe Sessions – A&M

8 **LAURYN HILL**
The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill – Ruffhouse/Columbia

★★★★ The timbre of Hill's voice – that deep, oven-roasted sound when rhyming, the sweet midrange when singing – it communicates a self-respect and self-love. The sound of a woman who takes herself seriously.
—*Touré, RS 794*

9 **CHERRY POPPIN' DADDIES**
Zoot Suit Riot – Mojo/Universal

10 **LUCINDA WILLIAMS**
Car Wheels on a Gravel Road – Mercury

11 **KISS**
Psycho-Circus – Mercury

12 **LIZ PHAIR**
Whitechocolatespaceegg – Matador/Capitol



13 **ROB ZOMBIE**
Hellbilly Deluxe – Geffen

14 **DMX**
It's Dark and Hell Is Hot – Ruff Ryders/Def Jam/Mercury

15 **DAVE MATTHEWS BAND**
Before These Crowded Streets – RCA

16 **BARENAKED LADIES**
Shoebox EP – Reprise/Warner Bros.

17 **THIRD EYE BLIND**
Third Eye Blind – Elektra/EEG

18 **MATCHBOX 20**
Yourself or Someone Like You – Lava/Atlantic

19 **MADONNA**
Ray of Light – Maverick/Warner Bros.

20 **EVE 6**
Eve 6 – RCA

This chart is based on a survey of RS subscribers conducted by DialAmerica from October 5th to 7th, 1998.

MODERN ROCK 20

1 **HOLE**
"Celebrity Skin" – DGC/Geffen

Even Hole's rough songs, like "Celebrity Skin," "Awful" and "Playing Your Song" – as close as the new album gets to the terse ferocity of 1994's *Live Through This* – have a sweet California-car-radio gleam, as if punk rock had been born of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* instead of in opposition to it.
—*David Fricke, RS 796*

2 GOO GOO DOLLS
"Slide" – Warner Bros.

3 EVE 6
"Inside Out" – RCA

4 LENNY KRAVITZ
"Fly Away" – Virgin

5 CAKE
"Never There" – Capricorn/Mercury

6 EVERCLEAR
"Father of Mine" – Capitol

7 BEASTIE BOYS
"Intergalactic" – Grand Royal/Capitol

8 EAGLE-EYE CHERRY
"Save Tonight" – Work

9 THE FLYS
"Got You (Where I Want You)" – Delicious Vinyl/Trauma

10 GARBAGE
"I Think I'm Paranoid" – Almo Sounds/Interscope

11 BARENAKED LADIES
"One Week" – Reprise/Warner Bros.

12 SEMISONIC
"Singing in My Sleep" – MCA

13 ALANIS MORISSETTE
"Thank U" – Maverick/Reprise

14 THE OFFSPRING
"Pretty Fly (For a White Guy)" – Columbia

15 THIRD EYE BLIND
"Jumper" – Elektra/EEG

16 SHAWN MULLINS
"Lullaby" – SMG/Columbia

17 FASTBALL
"Fire Escape" – Hollywood

18 THE SMASHING PUMPKINS
"Perfect" – Virgin

19 MARILYN MANSON
"The Dope Show" – Nothing/Interscope

20 SOUL COUGHING
"Circles" – Slash/Warner Bros.

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CANADIAN TOP 10

1 ELTON JOHN
"Candle in the Wind 1997/Something About the Way You Look Tonight" – Mercury

2 JENNIFER PAIGE
"Crush" – Edel/Hollywood

3 BRANDY AND MONICA
"The Boy Is Mine" – Atlantic

4 STARDUST
"Music Sounds Better With You" – Roule/Virgin/EMI

5 BARENAKED LADIES
"One Week" – Reprise/Warner Bros.

6 MONICA
"The First Night" – Arista/BMG

7 DEPECHE MODE
"Only When I Lose Myself" – Mute/Warner Bros.

8 NICOLE
"Make It Hot" – EastWest/EEG

9 INOJ
"Time After Time" – Columbia/Sony

10 98 DEGREES
"Because of You" – Motown

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TOP SINGLES 1968

1 THE BEATLES
"Hey Jude" – Apple

2 O.C. SMITH
"Little Green Apples" – Columbia

3 THE CRAZY WORLD OF ARTHUR BROWN
"Fire" – Atlantic

4 MARY HOPKIN
"Those Were the Days" – Apple

5 THE O'KAYSIONS
"Girl Watcher" – ABC

6 THE GRASS ROOTS
"Midnight Confessions" – Dunhill

7 GARY PUCKETT AND THE UNION GAP
"Over You" – Columbia

8 JEANNIE C. RILEY
"Harper Valley P.T.A." – Plantation

9 THE TURTLES
"Elenore" – White Whale

10 THE BEE GEES
"I've Gotta Get a Message to You" – Atco

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NUMBER-ONE SINGLES

MAINSTREAM ROCK: CREED *"What's This Life For" – Wind-up*
CLUB PLAY: DEBORAH COX *"Nobody's Supposed to Be Here" – Arista*
RAP: NOREAGA *"Superthug (What What)" – Penalty/Tommy Boy*

NUMBER-ONE VIDEOS

MTV: AALIYAH *"Are You That Somebody?"*
VH1: AEROSMITH *"I Don't Want to Miss a Thing"*
THE BOX: BIZZY BONE *"Thugs Cry"*

R&B TOP 20

1 DRU HILL FEATURING REDMAN
"How Deep Is Your Love" – Island/Def Jam/Mercury

2 XSCAPE
"My Little Secret" – So So Def/Columbia

3 MONICA
"The First Night" – Arista



4 DEBORAH COX
"Nobody's Supposed to Be Here" – Arista

5 DIVINE
"Lately" – Pendulum/Red Ant

6 KELLY PRICE
"Friend of Mine" – T-Neck/ Island

7 NEXT
"I Still Love You" – Arista

8 GERALD LEVERT
"Thinkin' Bout It" – EastWest/EEG

9 KEITH SWEAT FEATURING SNOOP DOGG
"Come and Get With Me" – Elektra/EEG

10 AARON HALL
"All the Places (I Will Kiss You)" – MCA

11 TQ
"Westside" – Clockwork/Epic

12 TAMIA
"So Into You" – Qwest/Warner Bros.

13 MŸA FEATURING SILKK THE SHOCKER
"Movin' On" – University/Interscope

14 MONIFAH
"Touch It" – Uptown/Universal

15 112 FEATURING MASE
"Love Me" – Bad Boy/Arista

16 JAY-Z FEATURING AMIL (OF MAJOR COINZ) AND JA
"Can I Get A . . ." – Def Jam/Mercury

17 NOREAGA
"Superthug (What What)" – Penalty/Tommy Boy

18 JON B.
"They Don't Know/Are U Still Down?" – Yab Yum/550 Music/Epic

19 DMX (FEATURING FAITH EVANS)
"How's It Goin' Down" – Ruff Ryders/Def Jam/Mercury

20 JON B.
"I Do (Whatcha Say Boo)" – Yab Yum/550 Music/Epic

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BILLBOARD'S TOP 50 ALBUMS

The first numeral indicates chart position the week ending October 24th, 1998; the second, chart position one week earlier; the third, number of weeks in the "Billboard" 200.

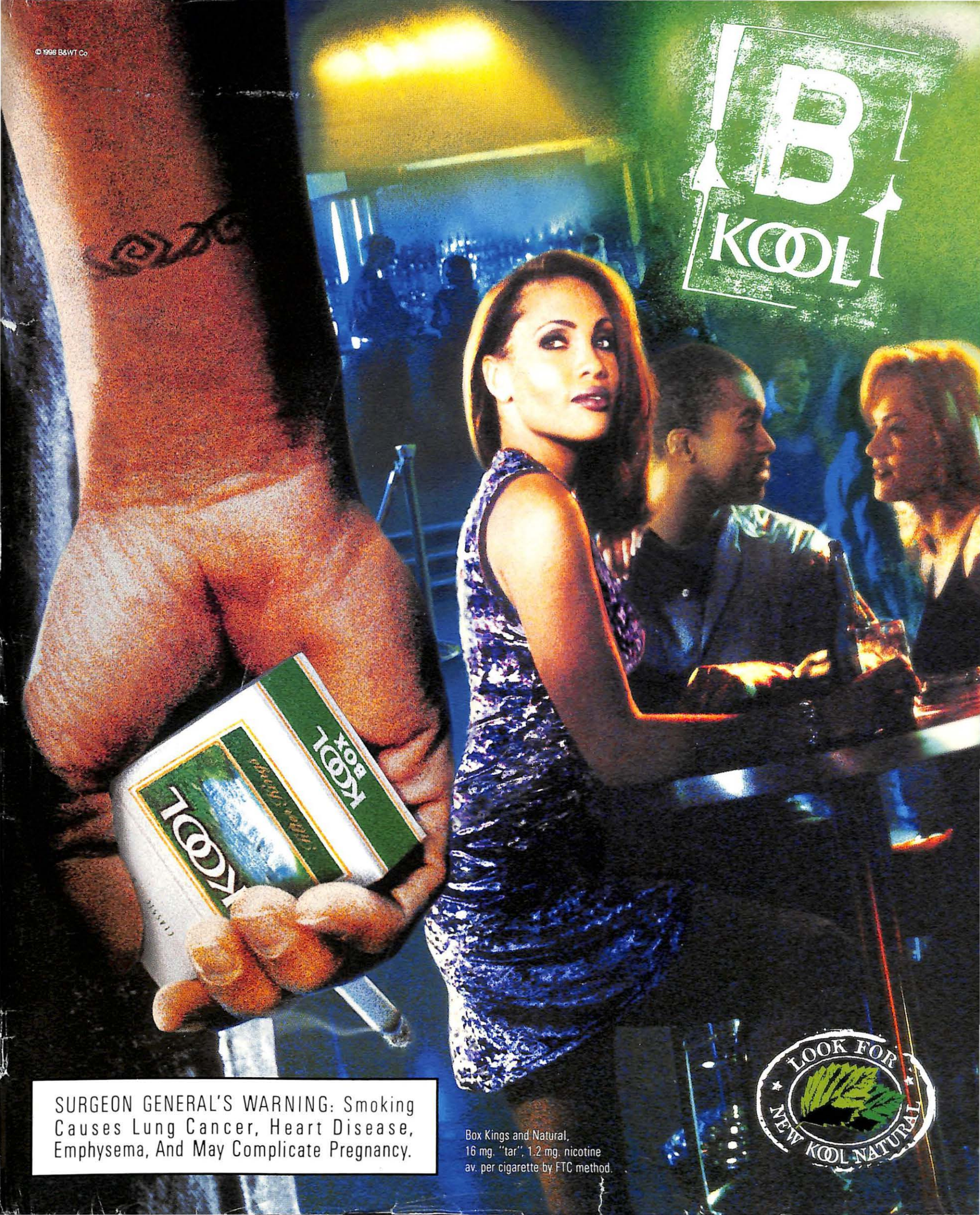
1.1	JAY-Z *Vol. 2 . . . Hard Knock Life – Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam/Mercury*	2
2.4	LAURYN HILL *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill – Ruffhouse/Columbia†2*	7
3	BIZZY BONE *Heaven'z Movie – Mo Thugs/Ruthless/Relativity*	1
4.6	'N SYNC *'N Sync – RCA†*	29
5.2	OUTKAST *Aquemini – LaFace/Arista*	2
6.5	SHERYL CROW *The Globe Sessions – A&M*	2
7.8	SHANIA TWAIN *Come On Over – Mercury Nashville†5*	49
8	KURUPT *Kuruption! – Antra/A&M*	1
9.7	KIRK FRANKLIN *The Nu Nation Project – Gospo Centric/Interscope*	2
10.10	BARENAKED LADIES *Stunt – Reprise/Warner Bros.†*	14
11	CYPRESS HILL *Cypress Hill IV – Ruffhouse/Columbia*	1
12.3	A TRIBE CALLED QUEST *The Love Movement – Jive*	2
13.13	BACKSTREET BOYS *Backstreet Boys – Jive†7*	61
14.11	RUSH HOUR *Soundtrack – Def Jam/Mercury*	4
15	MACK 10 *The Recipe – Hoo Bangin'/Priority*	1
16.14	BEASTIE BOYS *Hello Nasty – Grand Royal/Capitol†3*	13
17.17	DIXIE CHICKS *Wide Open Spaces – Monument/Sony Nashville†*	37
18	PHIL COLLINS *. . . Hits – Facevalue/Atlantic*	1
19.16	THE BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA *The Dirty Boogie – Interscope**	16
20.15	MARILYN MANSON *Mechanical Animals – Nothing/Interscope*	4
21.18	DR. DOLITTLE: THE ALBUM *Soundtrack – Blackground/Atlantic†*	17
22.12	KEITH SWEAT *Still in the Game – Elektra/EEG*	3
23.20	GOO GOO DOLLS *Dizzy Up the Girl – Warner Bros.*	3
24.19	ARMAGEDDON – THE ALBUM *Soundtrack – Columbia†3*	16
25.22	CITY OF ANGELS *Soundtrack – Warner Sunset/Reprise/Warner Bros.†3*	28
26.23	KORN *Follow the Leader – Immortal/Epic†*	8
27.26	ROB ZOMBIE *Hellbilly Deluxe – Geffen**	7
28.30	BRANDY *Never S-A-Y Never – Atlantic†2*	18
29.25	DMX *It's Dark and Hell Is Hot – Ruff Ryders/Def Jam/Mercury†*	21
30.21	HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH *Musical Chairs – Atlantic†*	4
31.24	HOLE *Celebrity Skin – DGC/Geffen**	5
32.9	VARIOUS ARTISTS *Mean Green – Major Players Compilation – No Limit/Priority*	2
33	CAKE *Prolonging the Magic – Capricorn/Mercury*	1
34	TWISTA AND THE SPEED KNOT MOBSTAZ *Mobstability – Creator's Way/Atlantic*	1
35.27	ALAN JACKSON *High Mileage – Arista Nashville†*	6
36	PRIME SUSPECTS *Guilty Til Proven Innocent – No Limit/Priority*	1
37	CELINE DION, GLORIA ESTEFAN, ARETHA FRANKLIN, SHANIA TWAIN AND MARIAH CAREY *VH1 Divas Live – Epic*	1
38	DEPECHE MODE *The Singles 86>98 – Mute/Reprise/Warner Bros.*	1
39.34	KELLY PRICE *Soul of a Woman – T-Neck/Island**	9
40.32	DC TALK *Supernatural – Forefront/Virgin*	3
41	JOHN MELLENCAMP *John Mellencamp – Columbia*	1

★★★★ Mellencamp strikes a middle ground between his origins as a straightforward rocker and his later compulsion to chase less-commercial tangents. If any one theme dominates, it's the need for moral authority to save us from ourselves, addressed forthrightly on "Your Life Is Now." Only toward the end of the disc does the thread break, as Mellencamp indulges a few ersatz side trips. Otherwise, this is a solid piece of work from a heartland artiste who is not merely coasting on the past.
—*Parke Puterbaugh, RS 799*

42.29	BACK TO TITANIC *Soundtrack – Sony Classical†*	7
43.28	SNOOP DOGG *Da Game Is to Be Sold, Not to Be Told – No Limit/Priority*	10
44.36	MATCHBOX 20 *Yourself or Someone Like You – Lava/Atlantic†7*	84
45.37	CREED *My Own Prison – Wind-up†2*	54
46.39	VARIOUS ARTISTS *ESPN Presents: Jock Jams Volume 4 – Tommy Boy*	7
47.38	WILL SMITH *Big Willie Style – Columbia†4*	46
48.47	BETTE MIDLER *Bathhouse Betty – Warner Bros.*	4
49	TELA *Now or Never – Rap-a-Lot/Virgin*	1
50.40	MADONNA *Ray of Light – Maverick/Warner Bros.†2*	32

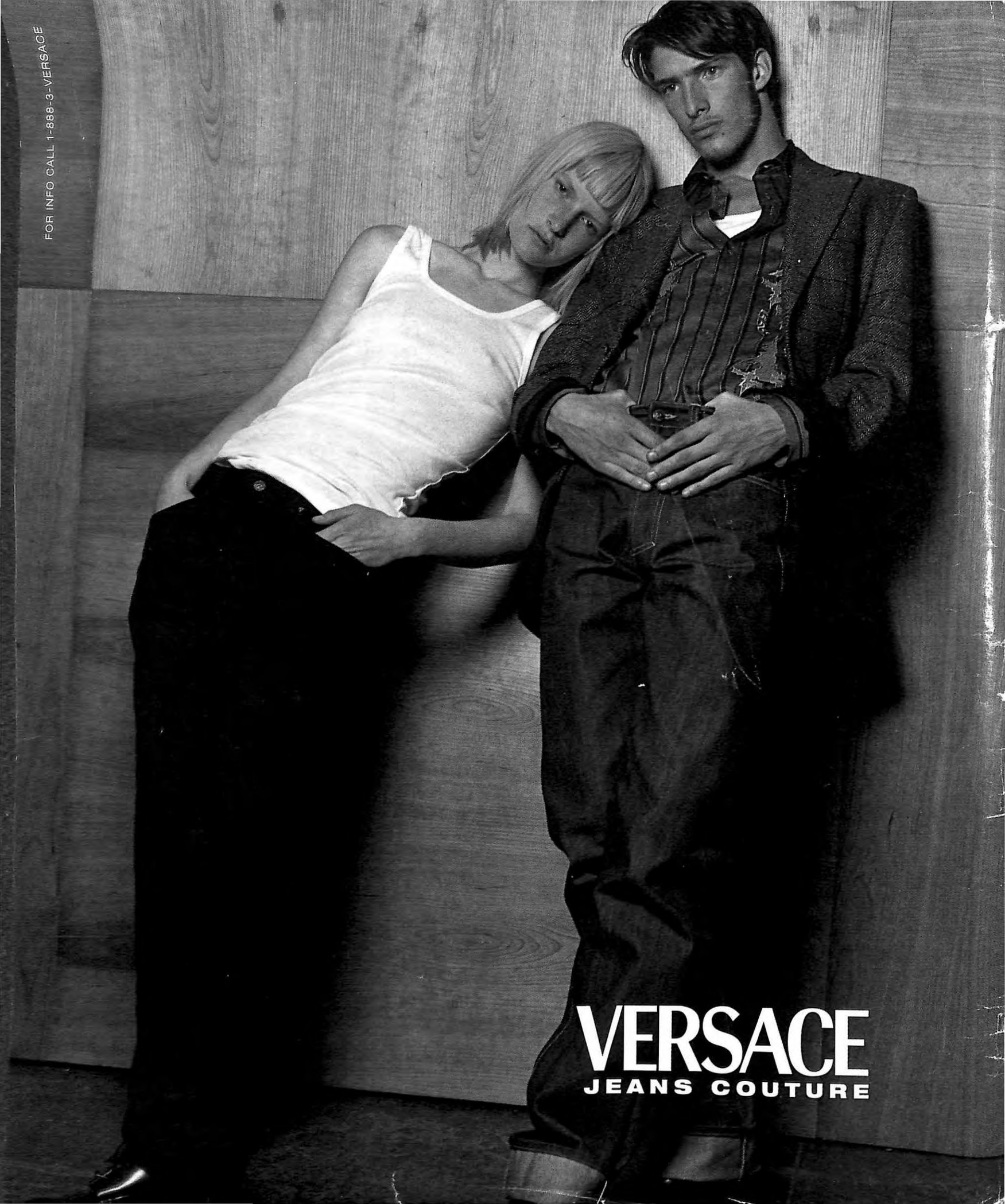
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John Hiatt: Little Head (Capitol) 20089

k.d. lang: Drag (Warner Bros.) 20258

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City Of Angels/Sdtrk. Sarah McLachlan, Alanis Morissette, etc. (Warner Bros.) 24484

Portishead (Ifrr) 21012
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